Developing Leaders to Bring Disruptive Innovation

Breakthrough innovations in healthcare don’t just happen. That’s why at Johnson & Johnson, the global healthcare products manufacturer, an immersive training initiative is preparing leaders to identify unmet needs the company can creatively address. Launched in 2012, the Accelerate Enterprise Leadership (AEL) program selects high potential senior leaders from every J&J business and management function and from multiple global regions, assembles them into teams of five to seven, sends them into two one-week residencies in communities around the world, provides group discussion and mentoring sessions, and culminates in presentation of actual business plan ideas.

“We really focus on disruptive innovation,” says Abby Pugh, Manager of Leadership Development. The focus of 2015 AEL, for example, was Disease Interception, which is a transformational concept that focuses on understanding the susceptibility, risks and process to stop disease before it happens. This shifts the paradigm in healthcare from diagnose and treat to predict and pre-empt.

During the in-market immersions, the participants gain insights in unconventional places. In their April and May residencies in Latin America and Asia, teams met with hospital and government representatives, patients and consumers to identify gaps in healthcare delivery and conceive of ways to fill them. “Collaboration across sector and region are goals at J&J. This program is one way that we achieve that,” says Pugh.

From May to November participants work on their projects, take part in coaching calls with AEL’s four professionals, and meet with a steering committee. In November they present their projects to the J&J executive and management committees, including the company’s CEO. “These projects have high visibility and there is actual funding at stake,” explains Pugh. “The committee will choose some to move forward and be funded.”

getAbstract Content Helps Future J&J Leaders Think Different and Think Bold

getAbstract summaries provide the only outside content for enriching the training of participants in Johnson & Johnson’s Accelerate Enterprise Leadership program.

Achieved Results

- Delivery of getAbstract content timed for relevance to participants’ needs for where they have progressed in the program.

- Alignment of content to Johnson & Johnson’s Leadership Imperatives of Connect, Shape, Lead, Deliver.

- Positive response: 90% of participants said getAbstract helped them understand program content, 40% of those said it truly enhanced their learning.

- Customer comment: “getAbstract is about helping people think different and think bold. It is just a great add-on.”
Throughout the program, getAbstract summaries of current business books and TED talks provide an important information resource for AEL participants. In fact, says Pugh, “aside from material we developed ourselves, there really is no other tool that we use like getAbstract. It’s just a great add-on that really does enhance their learning.”

**Articles Chosen and Timed for Immediate Relevance**

Every two weeks, the participants receive an email directly from Pugh, created by J&J’s getAbstract Learning Consultant, with a short synopsis of a getAbstract summary, and a link to it. “We call these ‘Micro Learning Nuggets,’” says Pugh. “getAbstract has partnered with us to ensure that the summaries directly relate to what participants are going through in their program at that time.” The five-page summaries are used in pre-class preparation, in-class discussion, and as post-reading exercises for reinforcement and review.

As Pugh described in a late summer interview, “some of the summaries going out now present ideas on creative problem solving, because the participants are at the stage where they might be struggling with issues of how do we move forward, or how do we agree as a team on our hypotheses or business models. And so the articles focus on where they are in the process.”

Besides providing ideas to help participants deal with immediate issues, getAbstract content also helps them to internalize Johnson & Johnson’s broader philosophy. As Pugh explains, AEL is designed to help Johnson & Johnson’s leaders enhance the company’s leadership imperatives of connect, shape, lead and deliver. Each AEL residency is focused on two components of the imperative: the first residency on connect and shape, the second on shape and lead, and the third on lead and deliver.

Use of getAbstract content actually began before the program started, with summaries distributed on diversity and inclusion to get the teams thinking about ways to work together and on disruptive innovation to get their minds around how this concept can bring change to Johnson & Johnson.

**Easy and Convenient Access Options**

Beyond the value of the content itself, basic design and delivery features help getAbstract meet the needs of AEL participants. “getAbstract provides us with articles that participants can breeze through,” says Pugh, discussing one benefit for people who have a lot to do in very little time. Besides electronic files that participants can read or print out, there are audio summaries that people can listen to at their convenience. And, she says, some on-the-go participants access the getAbstract content on their mobile phones, “because everyone gets their email on their cell phone.”

**Well Accepted and Positively Reviewed**

Pugh says users’ comments, getAbstract download figures and actual survey results all demonstrate the value of the getAbstract content. “I received many emails from the vice presidents, saying ‘this was dead on, thank you for sending,’ ‘I needed this right now,’ or ‘I’m glad you picked that article,’” she says.

“Well and I’ve been very surprised at the amount of people that read them, based on the results that getAbstract shared with me about downloads,” she continues.

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- Abby Pugh, Manager of Leadership Development

In a follow-up in which participants were specifically asked “Do you feel that the getAbstract Micro Learning Nuggets have helped you in understanding the topics being reviewed in the AEL program?” 90 percent answered yes, and 40 percent of those said getAbstract has truly enhanced their learning.