



# RESEARCH RESULTS—CLIENT

## ***Global Leadership Development Works: Holcim's Great LEAP Forward***

### **RESEARCH RESULTS BY:**

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### **REALIZATION RESULTS:**

Overall, 67 percent more Holcim leaders reported engaging in effective leadership after attending the LEAP program. Observers supported this, reporting a 44 percent increase in leaders displaying effective leadership skills.

### **INDUSTRY**

Industrial Manufacturing, Mining, and Quarrying

### **DDI PRODUCT USED**

Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders . . . Extraordinary Results® (IM: EX®)

### **BUSINESS NEED**

As one of the world's leading producers of construction materials, Holcim Ltd. employs more than 80,000 people in roughly 70 production sites around the world. Its product line includes cement and aggregates (crushed stone, sand, and gravel) as well as ready-mix concrete and asphalt. With a presence on every continent, Holcim is determined to meet the needs of individual business markets while maintaining its global standards of excellence.

In recent years the organization has experienced strong growth while facing challenges such as frequent acquisitions and global market shifts. Holcim realizes that maintaining its strong industry presence requires innovative thinking and strong individual leadership. Specifically, it

recognizes the need to empower its leaders to grow their local business markets while keeping them fully integrated in the organization's global network. Such an initiative, Holcim believes, would enable it to continually set the highest standards of customer satisfaction in the industry.

### **SOLUTION**

Holcim partnered with Development Dimensions International (DDI) to design the Leading for Accelerated Performance and Growth (LEAP) program. Capable of being administered worldwide, this training provides leaders the opportunity to develop skills that will have a direct impact on their job performance as well as that of their direct reports. The program was developed in part from DDI's Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders . . . Extraordinary Results® series and included the following DDI courses in its core curriculum:

- > *Essentials of Leadership*
- > *Coaching for Improvement*
- > *Coaching for Success*
- > *Setting Performance Expectations*
- > *Reviewing Performance Progress*

Together, DDI and Holcim created a solution focused on maximizing leadership potential while maintaining global consistency.

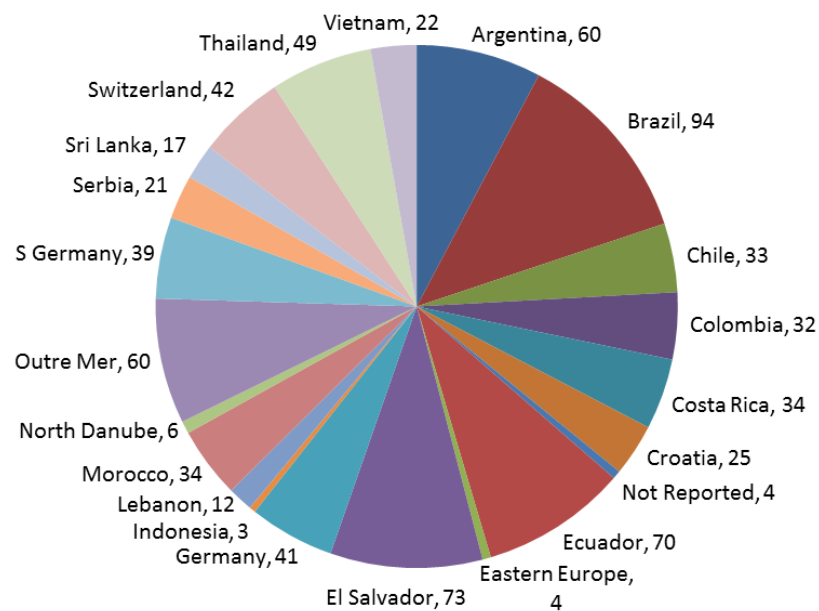


## RESEARCH DESIGN

A research study, designed to evaluate the change in leadership behaviors from before the training to afterward, was used to analyze the effectiveness of the LEAP program. Participants included 775 leaders from 21 global locations and 1,049 observers (that is, individuals selected to provide additional ratings of trainee behavior—managers, direct reports, and peers). Trainees and observers provided ratings through an online survey approximately 3–12 months after the leaders completed the

LEAP development program. To gauge the effectiveness of the program, the survey measured on-the-job behaviors related to the learned leadership skills both before and after the training. Additionally, it gathered perspectives of the work environment and the program’s impact on other organizational outcomes. **Figure 1** represents the number of trainees in each global location that participated in the study, and **Table 1** shows the management levels of the trainees and the observers.

**Figure 1. Sample of Trainees by Location**



**Table 1. Management Levels of the LEAP Study Participants**

Trainee	Observer	Level
0%	27%	Non-management
36%	27%	First-level management
49%	29%	Middle management
15%	17%	Senior management

## RESULTS

### Overall Results

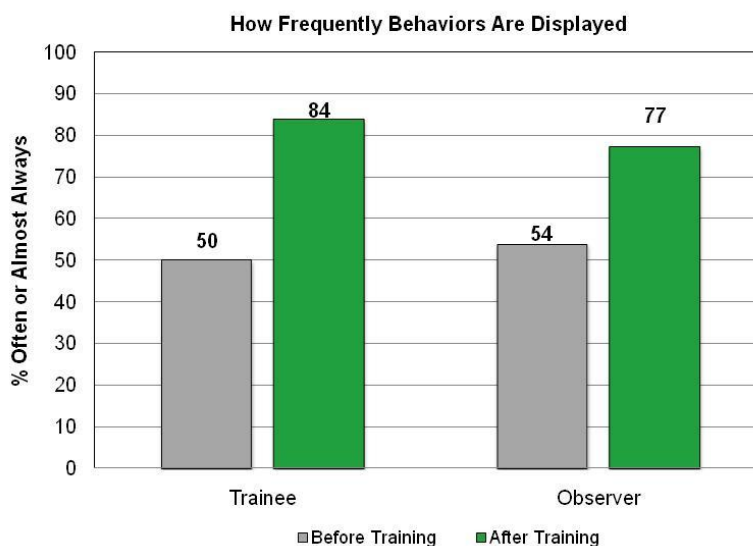
For each course in the program, at least three behavioral indicators, identified as learning objectives, were specified for the study. The leaders and observers were asked to rate the frequency (that is, never or almost never, rarely, sometimes, often, or almost always) with which the leader exhibited each behavior, both before and after the training. Each of the behavioral indicators was considered a critical outcome of the program, thus the focus of evaluating the results was on the percentage of leaders who displayed each behavior “often” or “almost always”—that is, those who engaged in effective leadership.

***Overall, 67 percent more Holcim leaders reported engaging in effective leadership after attending the LEAP program.***

***Observers supported this, reporting a 44 percent increase in leaders displaying effective leadership skills.***

Both leaders and their observers noted considerable improvements in the frequency of effective leadership occurring at Holcim following the training. Before attending the program, only half (50 percent) of the leaders reported frequently engaging in effective behaviors related to the curriculum; afterward, the number of leaders frequently engaging in such behaviors, according to their self-reporting, rose to 84 percent (a 67 percent increase overall). Similarly, observers suggested that before the training, a little more than half of the leaders (54 percent) displayed effective behaviors; but, they reported a 44 percent increase in the number of leaders displaying effective leadership after the training, indicating that 77 percent frequently displayed the targeted behaviors. **Figure 2** depicts the number of leaders displaying effective leadership skills (according to their self- and observer reports) both before and after the training. Overall, both groups reported a noticeable increase in the number of leaders frequently displaying these effective behaviors.

**Figure 2. Frequency of Positive Behaviors Reported Across Courses**

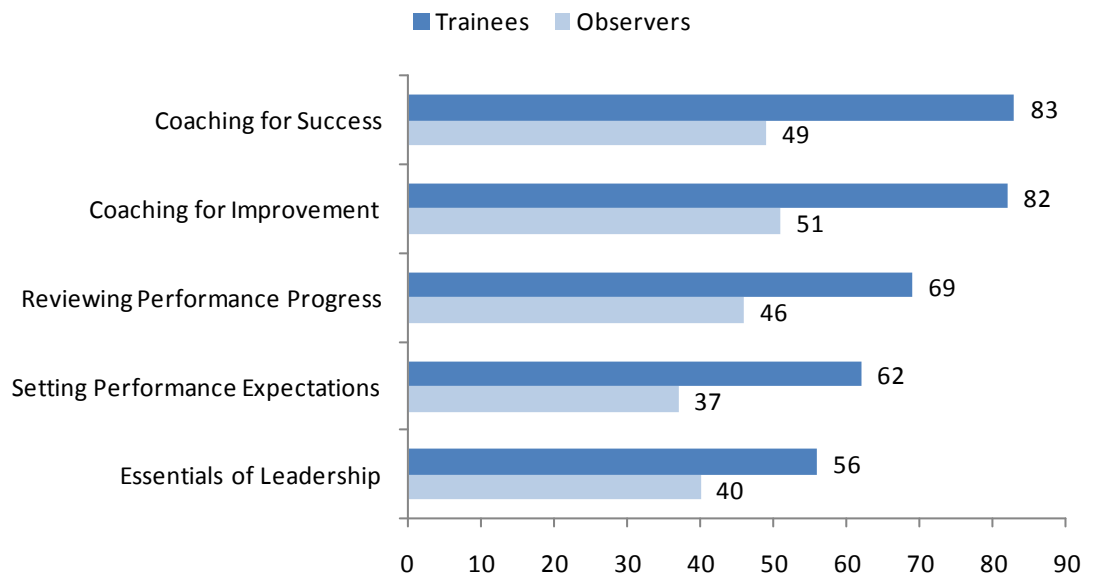


### Results by Course

Examining survey responses broken out by LEAP course illustrates the resulting increases in specific leader behaviors. **Figure 3** presents the percentage of behavior change demonstrated for each of the training courses in the program. Both leaders and observers felt the leadership skills that improved the most involved behaviors related to coaching direct reports. In fact, before the training, both trainees and observers reported that behaviors

related to coaching were demonstrated the least often compared to other behaviors represented in the curriculum. This demonstrates that the LEAP program was most successful at developing leadership skills in areas identified as significant growth opportunities for the leaders. However, because there is positive behavior change in all areas (shown in Figure 3), the program also effectively bolstered areas that were identified as strengths.

**Figure 3. Percent of Behavior Change by Course**

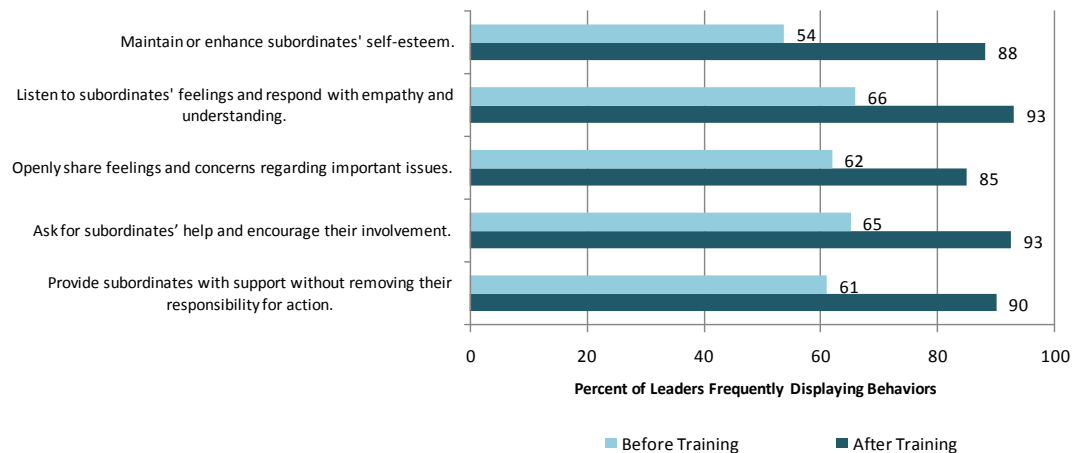


### *Essentials of Leadership*

The foundational course in Holcim’s curriculum, *Essentials of Leadership*, focuses on leaders creating a supportive environment for others and using key communication tactics to enhance interpersonal effectiveness. Before the training, roughly 60 percent of leaders felt they were effective in these behaviors; afterward, more than 90 percent reported that they were—often or almost always—applying behaviors such as listening to others and responding with empathy, asking for direct reports’ help and encouraging their involvement, and providing support without

removing responsibility, as illustrated by **Figure 4**. Out of all the courses in the LEAP program, *Essentials of Leadership* saw the lowest amount of behavior change reported by leaders; however, they reported that before the training they felt they were most effective in behaviors related to this course. The *Essentials of Leadership* behavior with the most improvement was maintaining or enhancing direct reports’ self-esteem—the number of leaders effective at this increased by 77 percent, overall. Before the training, only 54 percent of leaders reported frequently engaging in this behavior; afterward, this figure rose to 88 percent.

**Figure 4. Frequency of Essentials of Leadership Behaviors (according to leaders)**



*“The communication tools and skills which I have gained during the LEAP training have helped me to better understand the dialog process, to adopt and elaborate goals, and to be able to see the wider aspect of concepts. This means that not only was I able to master dialog but also acquire communicational and managerial skills, which will have long-term effects on my business behavior and lead to goal achievement. I’m using these skills almost every day in communications with my colleagues and especially when I’m coordinating with other departments in my company in order to collect information and produce final documents and reports.”*

—Holcim leader

### **Coaching for Improvement**

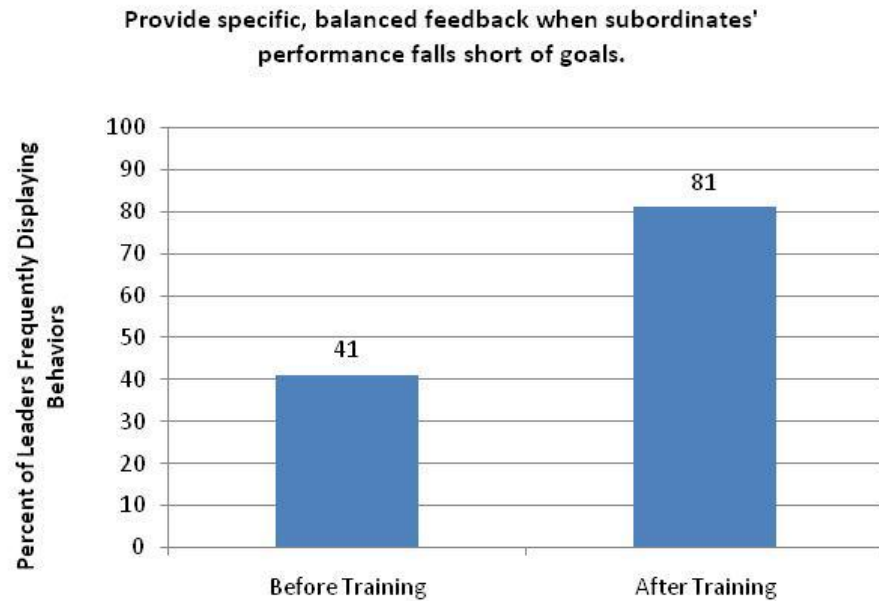
The *Coaching for Improvement* course helps leaders conduct effective improvement discussions with direct reports and provide them with the feedback and ongoing support they need to improve their performance. When comparing behaviors before and after the training, this course had the second highest overall percentage improvement (82 percent), due in part to the leaders being rated relatively low in this area beforehand. This suggests that coaching for improvement was a significant developmental need for them. Leaders reported the greatest improvement in providing

their direct reports with specific, balanced feedback when their performance fell short of goals. Observers, however, noticed the greatest improvement in leaders providing their direct reports with ongoing coaching and support to help them overcome performance problems.

### **Coaching for Success**

Equally important to Holcim’s leaders’ learning how to coach for improvement is their being equipped with the skills to coach for success. The *Coaching for Success* course shows leaders how to help others achieve their goals, thereby creating a positive work environment. Of the effective leadership behaviors evaluated, those related to coaching for success were rated as the most infrequently used before the training (only 44 percent of leaders reported that they frequently did this, while observers conveyed that amount to be 50 percent). However, as seen in Figure 3, coaching for success was the area in which leaders improved the most as a result of the training (83 percent overall increase in the number of leaders engaging in related behaviors). More specifically, after attending the program, the number of leaders who frequently and effectively provided objective feedback to direct reports about their performance increased nearly 100 percent (see **Figure 5**).

**Figure 5. Coaching for Success Behavior Change (according to leaders)**



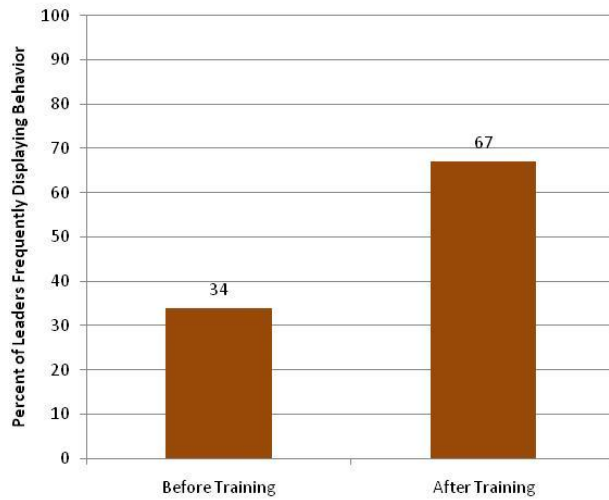
### *Setting Performance Expectations*

Effectively setting performance expectations involves clearly establishing what direct reports need to do in their jobs, and then working with them to determine how to reach their goals while gaining their commitment to achieving objectives. Both leaders and observers at Holcim considered the greatest improvement in this area was in establishing clear expectations for direct reports' performance, with the leaders reporting a 73 percent overall increase in using this skill. Leaders and observers noticed after the training more leaders attempting to work with their direct reports to determine how to reach performance goals, reporting overall increases of 58 and 33 percent respectively; however, because this behavior received the lowest overall increases compared to other LEAP courses, it is an area that leaders should continue to monitor and develop.

### *Reviewing Performance Progress*

Leaders and observers agreed that leaders improved in all behaviors related to *Reviewing Performance Progress*. This course emphasizes using performance reviews to guide direct reports toward success, encouraging them to either sustain good performance or improve their less-than-desirable results, and promoting them to take responsibility for monitoring their own performance. Both leaders and observers felt the greatest improvement in this area after the training was in leaders using performance reviews to guide their direct reports toward success (see **Figure 6**).

**Figure 6. Using Performance Reviews to Guide Direct Reports Toward Success**



*“I took control of a specific situation where a subordinate was vacillating in his goals and brought him back to the right track by evaluating his performance mid-term and showing him the digressions.”*

—Holcim leader

**Global Insights**

Holcim, with its global focus on talent management, needed to understand the variations in the LEAP program’s effectiveness across the world. It was imperative for the program’s success. To provide the most valuable insights, the 21 countries that participated in the training were grouped into

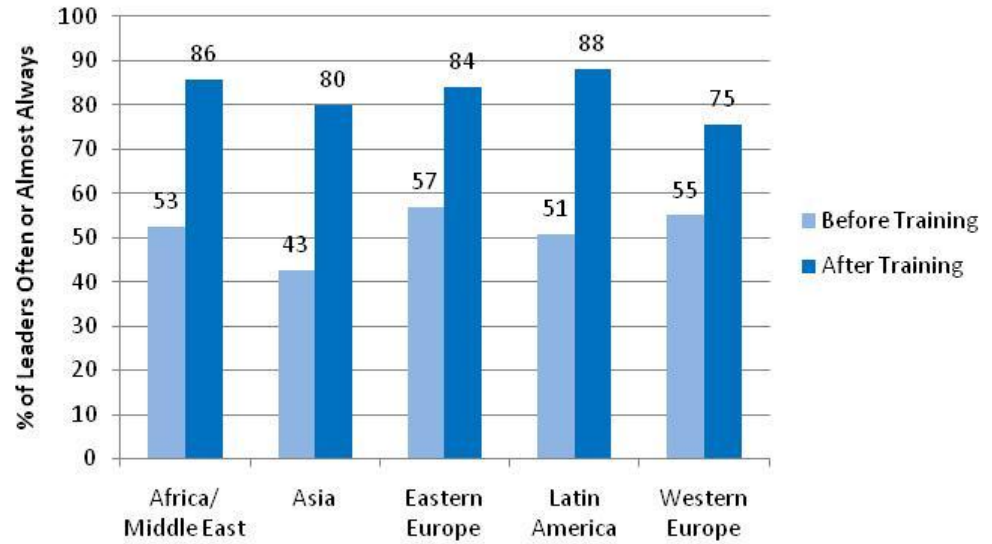
world regions (see **Table 2**) to analyze their results.

Encouragingly, all offices in these countries saw significant increases in the frequency of their leaders engaging in effective leadership behaviors. The region that saw the greatest increase was Asia (87 percent overall), while Western Europe saw the lowest increase (37 percent) (see **Figure 7**).

**Table 2. Countries by Region**

Africa/ Middle East	Asia	Eastern Europe	Latin America	Western Europe
Lebanon	Indonesia	Eastern Europe	Argentina	Croatia
Morocco	Outre-Mer	Serbia	Brazil	Germany
Sri Lanka	Thailand		Chile	North Danube
	Vietnam		Colombia	South Germany
			Costa Rica	Switzerland
			Ecuador	
			El Salvador	

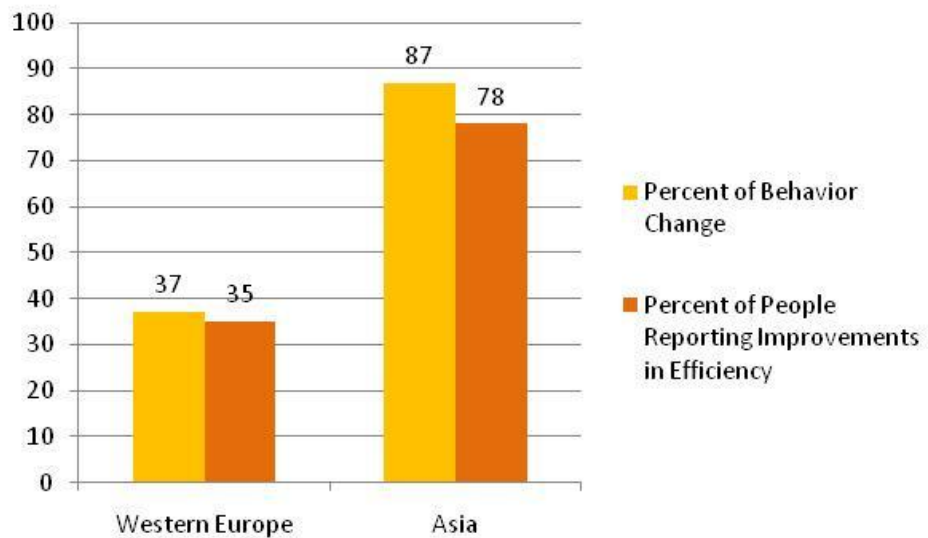
**Figure 7. Engagement in Overall Leadership Behaviors by Region**



The study found that, when compared to regions that experienced lower increases in behavior change (such as Eastern and Western Europe), regions that experienced the most behavior change (such as Asia and Latin America) were more likely to experience improvement in employee productivity, operational efficiency, employee engagement, overall business performance, and teamwork. For example, leaders in Asia were 123 percent

more likely to report an improvement in operational efficiency after the training than leaders in Western Europe (see **Figure 8**). This trend suggests that the more Holcim is able to increase the frequency of effective leadership behaviors, the more it will improve organizational outcomes that have a direct impact on the business, such as productivity, engagement, and performance.

**Figure 8. Example Trend between Behavior Change and Efficiency**



### Reactions and Outcomes

*Across the globe, Holcim's leaders found the development program to be applicable to their jobs.*

Holcim wanted to maximize efficiency while maintaining global consistency in its training; thus, it was critical that all leaders genuinely accepted the development program. Relevance is a major determinant of training transfer. If leaders feel what they have learned was irrelevant or not applicable, then the likelihood of transferring those concepts back to the job is highly improbable. Fortunately, 94 percent of Holcim's leaders reported that the skills and concepts addressed in the LEAP program are important for their jobs.

Furthermore, because the sample for this study ranged from positions such as plant operations and general management to marketing, sales, and distribution personnel, the skills learned in the training appear to be applicable across a

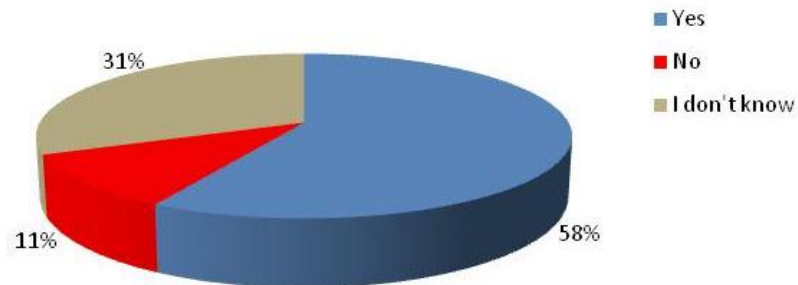
wide variety of leadership roles at Holcim. This, in addition to the 21 global locations of the sample, demonstrates that the LEAP program's curriculum is applicable across not only continents and cultures but also various leadership roles.

In addition to relevance, other factors such as having opportunities and being motivated to apply new skills play a role in improving organizational success. A large majority of leaders at Holcim (90 percent) report that they have had opportunities to apply their newly developed skills on the job since participating in the training. Equally encouraging, 91 percent state that they feel personally motivated to apply their learned skills or concepts, the results of which can be seen by the improvements highlighted in this report. Therefore, individuals at Holcim are primed to advance their leadership abilities and initiate changes that will lead to enhanced organizational effectiveness.

**Figure 9** shows that the majority of the observers in this study believe that the LEAP program has made Holcim leaders more effective. Additionally, more than half say that their behavior changes have led to an increase in leader productivity. Even more observers report that the leaders' recent behavior changes

also have led to an increase in their own loyalty or willingness to stay at Holcim. The ripple effect of the training has resulted in not only the leaders' improved productivity, but also an increase in the work-related attitudes of those with whom the leaders work closely.

**Figure 9. Observers' Perceptions: Did the LEAP Program Make Leaders More Effective?**



***Greater support and reinforcement would help Holcim reap even more benefits.***

Although its leaders are currently applying the concepts and skills they have acquired through the training program, Holcim also needs to create an environment that is more supportive of applying those skills. This would result in increased organizational improvements overall. The highest reinforcement marks in this report involve leaders being held accountable for applying their newly learned skills and concepts on the job. However, only 46 percent of

Holcim's leaders report any follow-up from their training. Additionally, a majority (75 percent) report that they would benefit from additional support or follow-up after attending the LEAP program. Although leaders have been able to apply their new concepts and skills on the job, Holcim would benefit from finding more opportunities to follow up with its leaders to improve their tactics and reinforce their behavior changes beyond simply holding them accountable for applying their new knowledge.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that the LEAP leadership development program and related efforts have had a significant positive effect on leader behaviors and the operations of work groups at Holcim. Its leaders have demonstrated an overall 67 percent increase in their frequency of engaging in effective leadership behaviors (with observers supporting this finding).

Before the training, skills related to coaching direct reports to improve and be successful were the most significant growth opportunities for leaders. These same skills showed the greatest amount of improvement after the training.

Organizational follow-up is an improvement area for Holcim, regarding enhancing its leaders' development and creating a culture of

continuous learning where they feel their efforts at practicing and applying new skills are important, appreciated, and supported. Despite this, in as little as 3 months and as much as 12 months after completing the program, leaders have used their new skills with great frequency.

Because leaders have applied the LEAP program's concepts, their leadership behaviors have improved; but also, those working closely with them have improved their own attitudes and productivity levels.

This evaluation demonstrates that the LEAP program serves its purpose of giving leaders the critical skills required to coach and develop their teams effectively. Moreover, the study has shown that the leadership tactics taught in the program are applicable, not only across a wide variety of leadership roles at Holcim, but also across the globe.

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