



Challenge

Three years ago, SM Energy Company completed a talent-review process with the goal of providing development for all employees that would instill a mindset of accountability and personal leadership, which in turn would increase employee engagement and retention. In essence, having a vast majority of employees who had been hired from other companies over several years, they sought to develop a common culture, and they needed a development program for all employees that focused on personal leadership, innovation, and collaboration.

SM Energy identified three main keys for success: timing, executive support, and quality partners. In light of internal

changes and challenges throughout the oil and gas industry, the timing seemed perfect to take action. The executive team fully embraced the initiative—from identifying core competencies, to participating in every program, to incorporating the concepts into the routines of the business. Lastly, SM Energy was seeking a primary partner with high-quality content and materials, and one who could provide ongoing support. The partnership required multiple parties to collaborate initially on items such as program length, optimal class size, and customization to include their core competencies. Further into the program delivery, the partnership involved tailoring content to accommodate an individual contributor, or personal leader, audience.

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– Newt Newton,
SVP Operations

Solution

SM Energy turned to FranklinCovey's All Access Pass® and embarked on a blended Leadership Learning Journey (LLJ) beginning with senior leaders. Groups of 24 leaders at a time participated in a four-month program that included two Live In-Person work sessions, four Live-Online webinars, and a variety of self-paced learning activities. Participants also engaged in monthly accountability group sessions and regular manager check-ins for continued application and reinforcement. Each LLJ program begins and ends with a networking dinner with the executive team. Last year, once all managers had completed the foundational program, the company and its FranklinCovey partners turned to the task of modifying components of the program to better fit participants who did not manage others, while preserving 85 percent of the core concepts and content. The company has launched its fourth LLJ program for personal leaders.

The program received unprecedented support from the C-suite executive team, encouraging implementation and adoption. The executives participate in every program kickoff, setting the tone and expectations for participants, and they personally facilitate the Live-Online webinars. Now that in-person dinners are not feasible, SM Energy conducts executive roundtable virtual chat sessions, where a number of participants are matched with a single executive and spend quality time learning more about the executive and each other individually, and sharing their experiences with the program.

The All Access Pass has many development solutions that SM Energy can apply across departments and disciplines. The SM Energy LLJ program currently uses FranklinCovey content including:

- *The 4 Essential Roles of Leadership*®
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*®
- *The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity*®
- *Leaders@Change*®
- *Jhana*®

Results

All of SM Energy's 160 managers and approximately one-third of its personal leaders have completed the program, representing about half of the entire company. SM Energy is on track to have all employees through the program at the end of 2022.

Early signs show that the culture is beginning to shift. Leaders are starting to use different language and regularly reference things they learned from LLJ. Leaders are building more collaborative relationships, providing feedback more readily, and discussing how they can more effectively achieve goals. Personal leaders are eager to participate and are grateful that the company is willing to invest in their success. Overwhelmingly, participants who have gone through the program say the content is relevant and valuable to both their professional and personal lives and relationships.

Here's what some SM Energy leaders had to say about the program:

Newt Newton, SVP Operations, reports these results: "The LLJ program is beginning to play a role in the success of SM Energy's Permian region. In the first year following the rollout of the LLJ program, the company observed increased employee excitement and engagement, a sharper focus on execution (which likely contributed to a significant savings in capital expenditures), and is on the path to developing a winning team culture. The LLJ program utilizes a framework built on SM Energy's experiences and needs and incorporates FranklinCovey's *The 4 Essential Roles of Leadership* and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The program provided the training and tools needed to create an exciting vision, develop and execute an aggressive strategy, and develop and coach new leaders and employees in an organization that grew 2½ times its original size in just over one year. The LLJ program provided a common vocabulary and the foundational knowledge necessary to create a winning team!"

The executive team recognizes they have an unlimited role in nurturing LLJ and are eager to continue development and culture growth throughout SM Energy. Carolyn George, Business Improvement Manager in IT, says, "The power of the FranklinCovey framework is driven by our executive team seeing the importance of the entire organization going through the program. We are all able to speak the same language, which is absolutely critical to our success."

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CFO Wade Pursell comments, “With the premise that (1) the right culture is critical to a company’s success, and (2) culture is essentially the collective behavior of its leaders, we have launched a development program—Leadership Learning Journey—which embraces the fundamental concept that everyone can be a leader. Through our partnership with FranklinCovey, we have built a program that embraces FranklinCovey’s time-tested concepts and content around leadership, and that is also customized for our company’s specific competencies and evolving culture. Across the company, we are trying new processes and beginning to speak a new language; there’s a lot of energy around this.”

About

SM Energy Company is an independent energy company engaged in the acquisition, exploration, development, and production of crude oil, natural gas, and NGLs in the state of Texas. SM Energy routinely posts important information about the company on its website. For more information about SM Energy, please visit its website.

SM ENERGY

Website

www.sm-energy.com

Industry

Oil & Gas

Number of Employees

500+

Opportunity

SM Energy is focused on increasing engagement and retaining talent through creating a culture of personal leadership. With the help of FranklinCovey’s All Access Pass, leaders are talking a new language, building collaborative relationships, and discussing how to more effectively achieve goals.

Solution

- *All Access Pass*
- *The 4 Essential Roles of Leadership®*
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®*
- *The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity®*
- *Leaders@Change®*
- *Jhana®*



The FranklinCovey All Access Pass® allows you to expand your reach, achieve your business objectives, and sustainably impact performance with unlimited access to FranklinCovey content. The pass comes complete with tools, assessments, videos, digital learning modules, and all of FranklinCovey’s training courses—available Live-Online, On Demand, and Live In-Person.

