

# Crestpoint Consultants

## Learning practices and the origin



As in any line of work, Learning and Development too comes with a set of challenges. The leadership development space especially has evolved across decades and has taken many avatars. Crestpoint, has been part of the high and low tides as a learning partner with many key organizations.

In the past two decades, trends included a rapid increase in the number of new leadership development methods and a growing recognition of the importance of a leader's emotional connect with others. A growing recognition that leadership development involves more than just developing individual leaders has now led to a greater focus on the context in which leadership is developed, there is thoughtful consideration about how to best use leadership competencies and positively impact not just at an individual level but more from a team and organizational level.

A consistent trend within Crestpoint is that all the challenges we have faced as a learning organization have only ended with a new practice that becomes part of our learning architecture and system. The present and the future have heavily originated from what we saw as "challenges" in the past.

This article tracks back and paces forward and gives a clear image of our present landscape. The what, why and how are voices from the background that get addressed as you read on...



# 1



## Challenge # 1: The event / journey scuffle | Period: 2001 to 2004 | Created: LAPs

### BEHIND THE SCENES ~

In 2001 “leader” development was emerging slowly but steadily in the priority list of most organizations. Even then, it was more tilted towards building individual leaders through events than building leadership through a learning journey.

The mindset change was 2-fold in the years to come:

Mindset change # 1 – developing leaders vs developing leadership

Mindset change # 2 – Development through an event vs development through a journey

This was clearly coming through in Crestpoint / Crestcom India’s experience as a learning partner in early 2000’s.

There were organizations that believed that a one or two day event-based intervention would help them build their leaders at an individual level with clear “knowledge outcomes”. Some believed that a learning journey is required to build

“leadership” at an organizational level with “expertise and system outcomes”

Crestpoint’s fundamental philosophy resonated with those who looked at expertise and system outcomes more than pure knowledge outcomes.

### PLOT ~

#### CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions

How to make it a journey?

What is the continuation between episodes?

How to move from knowledge outcomes to expertise and system outcomes?

#### LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:

LAPs – Learning Application Posts

#### MADE PEACE IN THE scuffle by:

- Making learning seep into work spaces through application posts between sessions
- Moving from a cognitive learning approach to application and result-based approach
- Engaging beyond the classroom experience

#### Results:

- 50% of the knowledge input translated into application at any given point with any given client from 2001 –till date
- Long term interventions and partnership. Average partnership tenure: 10 yrs + (max)

# 2

## **Challenge # 2: The missing compass | Period: 2004 to 2008 | Created: L 360 / IDP**

### **BEHIND THE SCENES ~**

By 2004, we started experiencing client organizations that are very clear about “leadership development” as one of the key priorities. The expectations were many in terms of outcomes.

Learning partners like us were coming up with path breaking ideas on moving from an event paradigm to a journey approach.

Speaking of a “journey” what was next? – A sense of direction, a map and therefore a compass.

Again, a mindset change was required because building a compass would really mean openness, introspection, overall reflection and therefore maturity from the receiving side.

The mindset change was 3-fold in the years to come:

Mindset change # 1 – becoming open about understanding self (including blind spots)

Mindset change # 2 – Realizing the connection between understanding self and learning application in the program



Crestpoint’s fundamental philosophy resonated with those who looked at tools and measurement for reflection as a pre-program exercise. A pre-program exercise backed with a meaningful report seemed like the way to go.

### **PLOT ~**

#### **CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions**

How to make the WIIFM strong for the learner right from the beginning?

What creates an environment for reflection with clear guidance on how to address gaps?

How to connect the dots between purpose, reflection and learning application?

#### **LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:**

L360 (Learning 360) assessment followed by an individual development plan (IDP) – the compass for the rest of the program

#### **FOUND THE MISSING COMPASS by:**

- Building a role-based Learning 360 questionnaire as an assessment tool (Pre and post program)
- Backing the assessment with analysis and recommendation on where to focus one’s energy in the program from a learning application perspective (IDP)

#### **Results:**

- Over 15000 IDPs generated from 2008. Clear enhancement in learner experience because of contextualizing and driving with focus
- 4% to 7% tracked improvement between pre/ post program scores

# 3

## Challenge # 3: Self-help did not help | Period: 2006 to 2011 | Created: LEO™

### BEHIND THE SCENES ~

By 2006, learning application seemed like the way to go. Learners were also clear about learning application focus and strategy right at the beginning of the program. The model was clear. Having a clear model in place was not enough, the mechanics started to give trouble in a moving car.

The model called for way too much dedication from the learners. The model was heavily dependent on learning application posts and the only entity that was responsible and accountable to do learning application posts was the "learner". No matter how hard learners tried, reality sucked them in like quick sand.

What seemed like a thought through model was now suffering an operational ailment. The self-help mode for learning application was the hiccup. The learner needed HELP for learning application. Someone had to inspire, follow up, follow through, remind, guide and coach beyond the classroom. Who would do it?

Client organizations were getting serious about an ROI by now. Every learner had a good reason to give on why learning application was tough in busy times. SELF HELP for learning application was not working.



Crestpoint's fundamental philosophy resonated with those who believed that a new role was required in the industry just to drive learning application.

### PLOT ~

#### CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions

Is dedicated support required for learning application as a new stream in the model?  
Does learning application really happen with a little extra support?  
Will this new role be able to break the illusion of busy-ness in the learner's day?

#### LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of: LEO – Learning Embedding Officer

#### LEARNERS began to FLOAT & SWIM because:

- The LEO became an integrator between the classroom and the work station
- It was clearer to marry real time targets at work with learning goals
- Measured implementation of learning helped in accelerating business metrics back at work
- There was structure and dedicated support to achieve expertise and system outcomes

#### Results:

- Excellent buy-in from client organizations for this practice which led to this being a client –paid aspect (billable) right from 2006 – till date.
- 200% consistent ROI on all exclusive programs from 2006 – till date

# 4

## Challenge # 4 | The skeptic program stakeholder | Period: 2006 to 2012 | Created: Online portal with manager involvement

### BEHIND THE SCENES ~

Between 2006 and 2012, a number of initiatives led to moving the learner from knowledge input to action learning. The evidences were available only at an anecdotal level.

It was very convincing to see a flurry of implementations across modules, across sessions, across organizations.

As always, when quantity is in place, one questions the quality. How do we assure quality of implementations?

The questions that Crestpoint had to answer were:

- Do these implementations really impact business metrics positively?
- How can one trust all that the learner posts?
- Was the ROI a perception?

To break into reality, the only route was to take tracking and validation to the next level.

Client organizations were keen to invest on learning analytics. A sense of ownership was required on both sides to make validation a robust process. The LEO was a catalyst, validation was the critical chemical. Did we get the equation right to wipe out skepticism in program investors?



Crestpoint's fundamental philosophy resonated with those who believed that an effective tracking and validation were worthy of investment.

### PLOT ~

#### CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions

How do we track learning implementations month on month, session on session?

Who are the key entities that make this process robust?

How do we connect the four important entities – learner, manager of learner, LEO, program owners?

### LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:

Online portal and Manager Involvement

### Program stakeholders breathe easy now because:

- Implementations don't count until they are approved by the supervisor / manager of the learner
- Learners upload implementations online
- Implementations get measured, tracked and rated transparently
- Managers are informed and updated throughout the program

### Results:

- Over 10,000 graduates with manager-approved implementations
- Zero tolerance for retro fitting and data fudging in the implementation process
- Hold off on certification until 50% of the modules are implemented with manager approval
- On demand learning analytics reviewed and considered for repeat business by stakeholders

# 5

## Challenge # 5 | Business Impact – The behavioral tangible| Period: 2012 | Adoption of Balanced score card

### BEHIND THE SCENES ~

In 2012, skepticism was not in the air but quantification with a balanced approach was required.

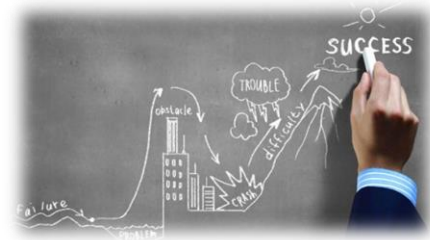
LEOs were able to get the learners to merge learning goals with work goals. Managers were getting comfortable with reviewing implementations. Program owners were getting comfortable with seeing ROI presentations batch after batch.

Learners were facing a challenge in quantifying behavioral learning which transformed into business impact. To build and consolidate ROI a standard formula was required.

Learners were expanding the horizon of implementations by doing cross functional projects through the program learning, by forming focus groups and taking initiatives, by taking over arching business goals that allowed them to use the program toolkit.

As learning partners, we just had to make this a lot easier for the learner.

This code had to be cracked by customizing a balanced score card for every client. With the LEOs support and the customized BSC, the climax for every engagement got better.



Crestpoint's fundamental philosophy resonated with those who believed that a customized balanced score card will bring standardization in ROI consolidation.

### PLOT ~

#### CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions

Do we know the client organization and their business well enough to build the BSC?

How do we showcase ROI to client in the language that is best understood by them?

Does ROI projection mean repeat business?

### LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:

Customized Balanced Score Card (BSC) – implementations linked to International Certification and PDU entitlement.

### ALL is well that ends well – how does it end for the learner:

- ROI consolidation through BSC approach
- Implementations linked to International Certification from Crestcom (Denver)
- PDU entitlement
- Alumni network and continuous learning through social media

### Results:

- Over 12 graduations every year with ROI on center stage
- 40% repeat business
- Eg: Rs. 44 cr revenue impact at a leading manufacturing giant. Rs. 36 cr cost saved – attributed to Crestpoint program implementations.

# 6

## Challenge # 6: Needed TWO to tango | Period: 2014 | Created: Concept of co-creation and core team

### BEHIND THE SCENES ~

In 2014, there was a huge temptation to feel that the learning model was just almost right. Program owners seemed happy, learners and managers were working as teams even from a program perspective, LEOs were working as an integral part of the client organization. The scene was looking good.

While we were just about to fall in the trap of feeling “perfect” about the learning model; learners and program owners woke us up to the next version of architecture. The program did not belong anymore to the partner or the client, nor to the learners!

Who did this belong to?

Who creates the program?

Who sells and socializes the program?

Who makes it come to life?

Crestpoint may have wanted to take ownership and point at ourselves for all these questions in early 2000s. Now, the game was different!

The program belongs to, gets created by and comes to life ONLY when it is done by BOTH (the client and the partner). Co-creation and collaboration took over.



Crestpoint’s fundamental philosophy resonated with those who believed a product has to be co-created for it to live long and prosper.

### PLOT ~

#### CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions

When should the client be involved?

How should the client be involved?

Who is the expert?

### LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:

Co-creation of customized / role –based content and approach

Formation of core teams with senior leaders from client organization

Core team becomes a bunch of apostles unintentionally and helps build program brand and visibility.

### When the client and partner tango on stage:

- Pipeline gets built automatically when a client side core team is highly involved
- Content is co-created and makes the learners experience the program real time
- No gaps in program relevance

### Results:

- CEO minus 1 / 2 are the levels at which core teams are formed
- Absorption of the program is 90% when content is co-created
- Strong endorsement of the program by top management

# 7

## **Challenge # 7: The death of the cognitive learner & the arrival of the agile learner | Period: 2015 | Created: Flipped classroom & Tech Enabled Learning**

### **BEHIND THE SCENES ~**

In 2015, like most of us in front of any door, Crestpoint was looking for a sign on the door. We seemed to have used the PUSH door for way too long now – felt like the PULL door towards learning engagement could be used a lot more.

We really had to become a part of the learner's priority chain. It was important to be a point of addiction for the learner. Mandating a program will not take us down the engagement path.

It was time for some crucial questions:

Does our learner want us or does the learner's organization mandate it?

Does the learner have time for this?

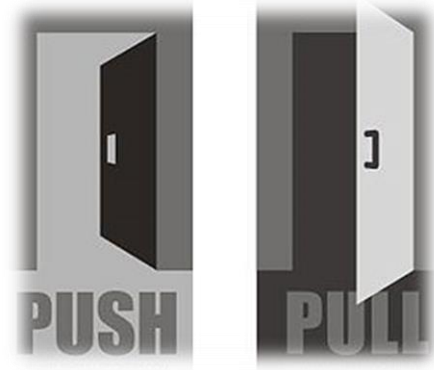
How to make best use of the learner's time for full on engagement?

Crestpoint realizes that the learner is fueled by implementations and usually craves for more time on implementations.

In today's technology enabled world, is cognitive learning in a classroom helping the learner or chewing into his / her time?

What if the time used for learning versus implementation was FLIPPED?

Will that keep the learner more engaged?



Crestpoint's fundamental philosophy resonated with those who believed in using learner's face time for application more than cognitive learning.

### **PLOT ~**

#### **CHALLENGE: 3 BIG questions**

Will cognitive learning take a hit if it is not done face to face?

Will the learner prefer using face time for collaborative action –based learning?

Which approach will lead to ROI?

#### **LED TO THE CONCEPTION & BIRTH of:**

FLIPPED classroom model

Technology / Mobile Enabled Online Learning

#### **When you PUSH learning online and PULL action-based input:**

- Managers and learners create wonders in flipped classroom sessions
- Learners sense freedom and flexibility because of online learning
- Better program visibility and buzz in the client organization because of flipped classroom sessions

#### **Results:**

- 50% of associate's billable learning time is released from archaic cognitive learning model
- 60% of program initiated implementations lead to revenue impact and cost saving – stems from flipped classroom sessions



# FINAL RUN DOWN

The event / journey scuffle led to:

- Learning Application Posts

The missing compass

- Learning 360
- Individual Development Plans

Self-help did not help

- Learning Embedding Officers

The skeptic program stakeholder

- Effective tracking - Online portal
- Manager involvement & Transparency

Business Impact – The behavioral tangible

- Balanced score card
- International Certification / PDUs

Needed TWO to tango

- Co-creation / Collaboration
- Core team formation

The death of the cognitive learner  
Arrival of the agile learner

- Technology Enabled Mobile Learning
- Flipped classroom session

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