

CASE STUDY: VEOLIA NORTH AMERICA

Changing the Face of Leadership: Developing and Retaining Women Leaders

Today, women face both enormous career challenges and limitless opportunities. The fact is women in male-dominated industries find it difficult to gain visibility. As record numbers of organizations report increased difficulty in engaging and retaining female talent, one industry leader is taking action.

Veolia Environmental Services North America, a leader in efficient waste and environmental solutions, recently partnered with IMPACT Group for a unique Women in Leadership program to ensure Veolia's pipeline includes strong women who are prepared for leadership roles.

Veolia Vice President of Human Resources, Michael Loeffel said, "The program's comprehensive package of web-based tools, personal coaching and leading assessments made an impact on my employees' experience. IMPACT Group's ability to customize the solution to our culture added value." As Veolia continues to promote diversity in its talent pool, the Women in Leadership program is ramping up for its second class of women.



CRACKING THE CULTURE CODE

National statistics show despite comprising more than 50% of management positions¹, less than 19% of women have broken the glass ceiling to be seated among senior leadership.² At Veolia, this challenge is no less great according to Corporate Project Manager Erika Kovacs, "There is an underrepresentation of women in higher roles within the company. So this is a great opportunity to be a part of something new and something potentially great for the company."

"Some of the biggest challenges women face are in stepping forward and saying, 'This is what I want, this is what I feel that I am worthy of, and this is what I deserve,' and being able to create a culture where it's okay for women to express what it is they are looking to do and achieve," shares Suzanne Coonan with Lake Forest Graduate School of Management.

In order to retain their talented women, Veolia enabled its female workforce to see themselves as leaders, overcome the barriers to advancement, and align their personal values with Veolia's corporate objectives. By creating an environment in which female managers can build confidence and gain acceptance, Veolia helped its women leaders maximize their strengths and abilities for a competitive edge.

PARTNER PROFILE

Veolia North America

Headquarters: Houston, TX

Employees: 15,000

Annual Revenue: \$2.3B



LEARNING TO LEAD

In order to fill Veolia's pressing need for strong female executives, IMPACT Group created a customized leadership program, exclusively for Veolia women. Designed for high-potential managers who want to accelerate their career into corporate leadership roles, the Women in Leadership program addresses their leadership aspirations and the skills necessary to break through roadblocks.

The year-long program was customized to feature:

- a Myers Briggs self-assessment workshop,
- personal coaching to help set individual development goals and monitor progress,
- discussions of key strategies for professional branding, and
- a strategic team project.



WHY IMPACT GROUP?

"We chose IMPACT Group, because of their ability to understand our needs and deliver solutions for our employees and our business. We started with IMPACT Group in a very traditional way – we got them involved in our transition services and from there the relationship has really grown. Now they are an integral part of our business." –

Michael Loeffel

The personal coaching and team project grew corporate exposure, business acumen, and project management skills. The principles and processes established throughout the year culminated in a two-day high-impact conference, where participants gained visibility among senior executives for their project accomplishments and built their spheres of influence.

The inaugural 25 graduates walked away with a clear sense of their skills and areas for improvement, a greater understanding of their business value and potential, and an expanded network of support. Organizational results included positive cross-functional teamwork, increased diversity within the talent pipeline, and higher levels of engagement, contribution, productivity and retention among women in management roles.

"Organizations, such as Veolia, have taken the time and effort and energy to bring these women up through the ranks and give them a platform to learn leadership development. And it's going to pay dividends down the road," says Robert Meyers, Senior Coach at IMPACT Group.

RESULTS ARE ONLY HALF THE REWARD

Success isn't just measured in results, which Veolia Account Manager Elizabeth Csipkay and her team achieved through the development of a customer-facing tool to display how Veolia recycles and disposes of waste. It's also measured in what is learned during the process. Elizabeth is now aware of how important a network is to expand horizons within an organization. "I believe that building strong relationships is what can lead to higher quality work and a more engaged organization," she said. "The opportunity to network with peers in other departments made the program worthwhile. People want to work with people they know and trust." Elizabeth feels that exposure was a key benefit of the program, and this is what she hopes will lead to additional projects down the line.

Elizabeth was thrilled her employer was willing to invest in her professional development, and she believes when employees feel valued, they are not only more engaged but also more apt to stay with the company. Elizabeth said, "IMPACT Group's coaching was critical to my growth as a leader." As she prepares to step into her next role as a Key Account Manager, Elizabeth is excited to grow the relationships she built during the program and maintain a strong network within the organization, maximizing every relationship to continue to drive Veolia as an industry leader.

The reality is women and men typically bring different experiences, perspectives and competencies to leadership roles. Companies that realize the business benefits of better engagement from female leaders know they will need to embark on a major campaign for positive cultural change within their organizations. If your challenge is to diversify the leadership culture in your company, IMPACT Group's customized programs can produce measurable results. To learn more about how we can help your business, visit impactgrouphr.com.



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¹ Catalyst, 2012 Catalyst Census: Fortune 500 Women Executive Offices and Top Earners (2012).

² The White House Project: Benchmarking Women's Leadership, 2009, The White House Project.