

# OnPoint<sup>®</sup>

COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

As one of our Core Values at OnPoint states we are “Passionate about our employees and ensuring they are equipped for success.” This commitment is an integral part of our overall business strategy and is documented in our five-year plan: “Continually invest in employee development.”

We understand this investment in our employees’ development holds potential for great returns as substantiated by a recent study by Bersin in Deloitte: *“Organizations that have a strategic talent management program in place generate more than twice the revenue per employee than those without programs, have a 40 percent lower employee turnover rate, and have a 38 percent higher level of employee engagement.”*

Last year, we took a closer look at where we were focusing our development efforts and determined we were more frequently targeting those leaders in the organization already holding a “manager” title. While we offered a basic curriculum for newly-promoted supervisors, as well as, general professional development courses for those aspiring to roles with greater levels of responsibility, we were not directing enough attention to our existing talent pool of assistant managers, supervisors, and team leads.

The importance of this section of our talent pipeline led us to the design of a new leadership development program we call SOAR that was launched in early 2016. We chose this acronym because the letters represented the core elements we wanted to address with the leaders who would be part of this program:

- **S = STRENGTHS**
  - Understanding and leverage your strengths
- **O = OPPORTUNITIES**
  - Understanding where you have opportunities to learn and grow
- **A = ASPIRATIONS**
  - Understanding what it will take to achieve your professional goals
- **R = RESULTS**
  - Leading the organization
    - Hitting organizational targets
  - Leading others
    - Building high-performance teams
    - Leading yourself
    - Achieving your personal and professional goals

We decided to hold quarterly day-long conferences for our target audience. We chose the term “conference” so participants would understand we wanted to engage them in a variety of learning and development experiences throughout the day, and thus it would be different than attending a traditional workshop that centered on a single topic.

We also established target outcomes for the program, to ensure we could look back after one year and assess if we had been successful.

1. Build and/or Enhance Relationships – This is our primary objective because we believe that no matter how individually gifted or talented someone might be, building and maintaining effective relationships is a major key to success in the business world. We set out to help these leaders build their relationship skills by designing a program where participants could come together to learn about and from each other. Our goal was not to break down silos, but rather build bridges *between* those silos and uncover opportunities to form effective coalitions in the workplace. Our design included activities during the conference and learning assignments (pre- and post-conference) that would require participants to collaborate to ensure successful completion of their tasks.
2. Develop and Hone Critical Leadership Skills – Given this is foundationally a leadership development program, we wanted to ensure it included opportunities for participants to learn and hone critical leadership competencies identified by our executive team as key to our organization’s success.
3. Expand the Level of General Business Acumen – We felt it was important we include a component that would ensure our leaders were exposed to speakers who could help them better understand the fundamentals drivers of our business so they can make good decisions, lead our teams well, and ensure the ongoing success of our company.

Each quarterly conference centered on a different theme and was designed to be as interactive as possible. The 2016 sessions tackled subjects such as understanding your own talents and leveraging your strengths, developing your direct reports, building high performance teams, and holding others accountable. Our executives led presentations that covered information to help participants better understand our credit union’s financials, the impact of interest rate risk and the real cost of employee attrition. In 2017, the first two conferences will focus on employee engagement and leading change. We have incorporated teaching, leadership panels, videos, subject matter experts (both internal and external), experiential learning and games, and robust group problem identification (and solving) discussions into each day’s agenda.

Each participant has an accountability partner and at the conclusion of each conference, they are asked to share with that partner two commitments they are making as a result of the day’s learning. The expectation is that they will connect with this person at least once or twice between conferences to discuss how they’re doing on their commitments and any successes they’ve had. If they haven’t been able to honor their commitments, they’re asked to challenge each other to uncover what obstacles are getting in their way, and explore how they can help and/or support each other. There are also group accountability calls facilitated by our team where 7-8 participants collectively can check in on each other. It provides a great forum for celebrating successes, working through problems, and providing support as they tackle the challenges of management.

We maintain a SOAR Team Board in our Learning Center (LMS) that allows us to share announcements, e.g. promotions, house a library of resources (articles on leadership, tools, e.g. assessments, slide decks and handouts from the conferences, links to websites, etc.), and provide a forum for participant interactions.

We have also purposely involved the managers of the leaders in the program. They are provided with regular communications about pre-work and post-conference assignments so they can encourage and support their team members as well as help hold them accountable for applying their learnings from the conferences. We also conducted a feedback forum with these managers to gather their input on the effectiveness of the program and enlist ideas for future topics.

Feedback from the participants and their managers has been consistently very positive. We are averaging a rating 4.8 on a scale of 5 on the participant's overall conference experience. Feedback includes comments such as:

- *"SOAR has created stronger peer relationships, has helped identify personal key strengths and how those strengths make an impact in my day to day managing. It has given tools to help prioritize and reflect on what is important and how we can help share, create and develop success within our teams and organization."*
- *"I feel that this program has been extremely helpful in my career growth, especially in respects to becoming a more successful leader. Each quarter I feel like I learned something valuable and got to build a better peer network that has proven to be invaluable. I seriously appreciate this program so much!"*
- *"The soar program has helped me prioritize what is most impactful to my team and branch. The Pinch Method has truly helped with avoiding conflict and conflict resolution, I shared this with the team and have seen them exercise it and it works! Great stuff!"*
- *"I believe the SOAR program has been exceptional. It has really helped to grow aspects of being in management that we had no idea we needed or existed."*
- *"My experience in the SOAR program has offered support and direction with **Self Growth** – identifying areas of opportunity and holding me accountable to improve and the program has **Bridged Relationships** not previously experienced in the institution.*
- *SOAR has been a fantastic opportunity to get to know team members I've never met, strengthen relationships I already had and change pre-conceived notions about people I only knew of by reputation. I've built several new alliances and have called on those people often in the months since our first conference. This has been a great experience all around!*

And, our CEO, Rob Stuart, said this program is one of the most significant contributions our team has made to the organization. New relationships are being built, new skills are being learned, important information is being communicated and these leaders are feeling valued because of this investment in their success.

In addition to meeting our target program objectives, we had hoped to realize the added benefit of high potential talent being ready even sooner for promotional opportunities. In fact, that benefit has been realized. In one year, there have been 9 leaders (19% of the program's population) who have been promoted to roles with higher levels of responsibility within the organization. There are other measures of success that can be attributed, in some part, to the impact of this program. OnPoint achieved record earnings in 2016, our overall employee turnover has significantly decreased, and when benchmarked against other financial institutions, we scored an enviable 83% in a recent employment engagement survey where 96% of our employees said they would recommend OnPoint as a great place to work.

Even though this program pulls key contributors out of production for a full day each quarter, the return on our investment has been remarkably strong and our executive team remains committed to supporting this important initiative.