



## Unisys

### Closing the talent gap through accelerated leadership development

Unisys designs, builds and manages mission-critical information technology environments for businesses and governments in more than 100 countries and has more than 23,000 employees. Unisys specializes in security, data center transformation and outsourcing, end user outsourcing and support services, and application modernization and outsourcing.

“It is all in how we execute,” says Alan Kather, Vice President of Talent Management and Unisys University. Under Alan’s direction, Unisys has built solutions that address the full spectrum of its leadership pyramid.

The Unisys leadership framework can be broken into three targeted leadership layers associated with its own set of learning assets, all of which are aligned to business strategies and tailored. In the first tier (Unisys Management Journey), supervisors and managers follow a development guide, self-assess themselves and have access to Skillsoft® BusinessPro™ and Skillsoft Business Skills Courseware and Skillsoft Books24x7®. In the second tier (Unisys Leadership Advantage), directors and entry-level vice presidents have access to SkillSoft

Leadership Advantage™ Portal and a mix of assets from the previous and next level up. The last tier (Leaders Leading Leaders), consists of the top 200 leaders with exclusive SharePoint® access to the Leaders Leading Leaders Portal, SkillSoft Leadership Development Channel™ and Skillsoft 50 Lessons™ videos, Skillsoft ExecSummaries™, Skillsoft BusinessPro Collection, live peer facilitated discussions, mentoring and customized service levels.

Not surprisingly, once the Unisys training budget was cut, positions were dissolved and gaps were left open to fill, Alan had to think creatively about how he was going to deliver a world-class leadership program with less people and less financial backing.

#### Leaders at all levels

The culture at Unisys is one that empowers all managers, from front-line managers to the CEO, to be seen as leaders of the organization. “We look at leadership development at all levels. One of the most important parts of leadership is self awareness. If someone is in their mid thirties and is now a boss, he or she is missing out on, say 10 years of self awareness that could have put him or her in a better position as a leader,” said Alan.

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### Challenge

- Due to the global economic crisis, the entire classroom-based executive education program budget was dissolved
- Talent from within and across business units was required to fill leadership gaps
- Unisys had to set its sights on fostering more management and leadership.

### Solution

- Reduce or eliminate expensive offsite training
- Provide elearning programs
- Create a well-rounded leadership program with SkillSoft’s courses, books, videos and business book summaries

### Results

From first-line supervisors to the top 200 executives, Unisys nurtures manager and leadership development in a way that is perfectly aligned with its business strategies and its delivered at a fraction of its former budget.

Although the culture was in place, many leaders couldn't afford the time to develop their team members, further widening the leadership gap exacerbated by the organizational restructuring. Alan recognized the need for early intervention and started closing gaps, "The mindset shift is turning leaders into teachers and coaches. By doing that, that's how they're shifting that bell curve to the right and people will mimic it all the way down the organization."

His first order of business was to create a virtual and personalized environment; inviting the top 200 leaders to be inspired by selected content, discuss how it applies to Unisys, and share how it has helped them view situations differently. The content is organized to support Unisys' leadership competencies, a framework that provides structure, supports the CEO's three-year strategy and adapts to emphasize the needs of unique business units.

### If you build it, will they come?

Alan understood the falsities around the "if you build it" myth and applied classic change management techniques to learning, "I'm a strong believer that the content is critical, but it's the execution of the content that then will make the difference between what level of results you actually achieve," he said.

Alan's team implemented a review process in which his team members carry out a personal prescriptive approach consisting of

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*Alan Kather*  
Vice President of Talent  
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a one-on-one meeting with managers. The team demonstrated the portal and its user interface. The team also showed leaders how to start a meeting with one of the Skillssoft Leadership Development Channel videos. In doing this, a critical mass was created, thereby giving way to a leaders leading leaders methodology. Alan catered his messages to the leaders on their turf, on their time and gave them personal attention. In doing so, Alan's team didn't just create a portal; the team embedded content into everyday workflow, removed the complexity and reduced the amount of activation energy required to access training.

"The only way you're going to change behaviors, truly change behaviors, is if you change belief systems. And that's what happened. Belief systems were changed," said Alan. "People owned it through the discussion. It wasn't somebody standing out there saying, 'This is what you have to do differently.' No, it was a concept put out there, and they gravitated to it and then had the discussion."

This methodology of catering learning and delivering it at the time of need, such as a meeting with other team members and using bite-sized learning assets, has allowed for incredible success at Unisys. At the end of the day, Alan and his team have created ambassadors within Unisys who trickle down key messages that are aligned to its business strategies.



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