

What strong programs have in common

Five choices we see in the best-run leadership programs

The strongest programs we see are rarely the ones with the biggest budgets. They tend to be the ones that got a handful of structural choices right, and what those choices have in common is that they cost little or nothing. Whether your program launches next quarter or is already running, here are the five we see most often.

Five choices

1 Are your executives in the curriculum?

The strongest signal a program can send costs nothing, and it comes from leaders doing the same sessions as everyone else. When leadership shows up as learners, nobody has to be told the program matters, because they can see it.

2 Have you decided what's shared and what's personal?

Running everyone through the same sequence builds a common vocabulary, while personalized paths fit people whose roles genuinely differ. Both work well when they're chosen on purpose, and even fully personalized paths benefit from crossing somewhere the cohort can compare notes.

3 Does the timeline protect momentum?

A generous window feels safe, but it tends to work against you as the gaps between sessions quietly grow. A schedule with a real end date and a cadence you'd defend keeps the energy from kickoff carrying through to the finish.

4 Can managers see progress from day one?

When a learner's manager has visibility into utilization and feedback from the start, they ask better questions in one-on-ones without being prompted, and small issues surface while they're still small.

5 Is peer connection designed in?

Putting learners in front of each other early and deliberately turns a cohort into a group of people comparing notes rather than a list of names, and it's often the piece clients tell us is driving engagement.