

# LEADERSHIP BEYOND THE THEORY

## NICOLE IRSCHICK

GENERAL MANAGER - SEEKOM



*"Even after all these years in leadership there was still so much to learn or that challenged my thinking and approach. Would I recommend LBT for anyone truly committed to their own personal growth? YES, YES, YES!!!"*

**30**

NUMBER OF YEARS  
AS A LEADER

**10/10**

LIKELIHOOD TO  
RECOMMEND TO OTHERS

**220**

LARGEST TEAM  
NICOLE HAS LED

### WHAT SPECIFIC CAREER CHALLENGES DID YOU HAVE, THAT LED YOU TO LOOK FOR A SOLUTION LIKE LBT?

I recently moved from a COO role to taking over running a company that our parent group had acquired. Not only was I faced with the challenge of stepping up to a broader leadership role, but I also had the challenge of leading a team that was nervous about the acquisition and had only ever worked for the previous founding owners.

I recognised that this required me to stretch my approach to leadership beyond what I had learnt and applied to date. I was looking for exposure to different insights and approaches, and to have my thinking challenged to ensure I do the best for the company, our customers, our people and our parent company.

### WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT THE PROGRAM, ANYTHING THAT YOU DIDN'T EXPECT?

The webinars did surprise me in a very positive way - they are so interactive and real! It did give it a sense of an 'intimate' study group and made it all very personable.

## **CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SELECTION PROCESS AND WHAT CRITERIA YOU WERE LOOKING FOR TO ENSURE THIS WAS A SOUND INVESTMENT OF YOUR TIME AND MONEY?**

Marty was a guest speaker at one of our leadership conferences and his approach resonated. LBT seemed like a natural choice when we were looking for a suitable advanced leadership program.

I am a firm believer that you get as much out of something as you put in, and given my objective, the time investment almost didn't come into the equation. I knew what I wanted from the program, so if that took more time than I had anticipated then I made the time. Otherwise, why bother in the first place?

And with that, I see that the financial investment is naturally paid back as well, as the program keeps giving. It's a lifelong thing that you can keep coming back to, keep challenging yourself and keep applying the concepts in different environments.

## **WHAT WAS YOUR 'PIE IN THE FACE MOMENT', THE CONCEPT THAT REALLY STUCK WITH YOU AND MADE YOU GO 'WOW, I NEED TO WORK ON THAT!'?**

It was probably *Module 1: Deliver Value*. Clearly understanding and defining what drives value for your organisation and then aligning initiatives accordingly sounds simple, but was an eye opener.

Asking the questions '*What is the value that we're wanting to drive?*' and '*Is this initiative creating that value?*', was not something that I'd ever seen incorporated before. I'd always ask the '*So what?*' question in the past, which was aimed at exploring the value. But that was a very insular approach and there wasn't anything at an organisational level that I could align it to.

The other was to be aware of not rewarding and recognising people for activity, but rather for delivering value. It was a great reminder to ensure that I set people up for success by clearly aligning the outcomes I'm looking for from them and measuring those outputs. When they tell me how busy they are, and all the activity they're doing isn't aligned to or yielding the outcomes we discussed, then it won't receive 'applause' from me. Instead I'm able to have the free and frank - and at times robust - conversations, and I will redirect their focus and activity on those things that will deliver the value.

## **IS THERE ANY FEEDBACK THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE VALUABLE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS TO KNOW?**

Commit to it, do it, practice it and share it! You've got to be selective and focused on the top two or three things that will drive the most value for you right now. Once you're close to embedding these, move to the next. I shared my learnings with my team so that they understood my approach and what I was trying to achieve.

Make the most out of the time you have on this program, and the direct access to Emma and Marty! If you put in the work, you'll get the results.