

Leadership Series: Course Descriptions

ACEC Colorado's Leadership Series is an ongoing work in progress and continues to evolve as new core competencies are identified for each level of leadership in consulting engineering.

This course overview includes details for each of the following levels:

1. **Emerging Leaders**
2. **Mid-level Leaders**
3. **Senior Leaders**

Each distinct level will experience a comprehensive track tailored to develop and enhance skills and tools needed at various stages of a leader's career.

Emerging Leaders

Emerging Leaders - Overall Description: This series is designed for emerging leaders who aspire to enhance their leadership abilities and build a solid foundation for future growth. Through engaging activities, practical exercises, and real-world examples, participants will gain tools and knowledge needed to navigate their roles confidently and lay the groundwork for future leadership success.

NOTE: Module titles, descriptions and order subject to change.

MODULE 1: Practicing with Integrity

This module covers key aspects of accountability, ethics in business, professionalism and implicit bias, using artificial intelligence (AI) as a case study. It aims to equip participants with essential skills for practicing with integrity, assuming accountability and engaging in an inclusive work environment.

Objectives:

1. **Accountability:** Define and implement personal and team accountability.
2. **Ethics:** Identify and navigate ethical challenges in the workplace and make ethically informed decisions in times of disruptive change, including AI.
3. **Professionalism:** Maintain high standards of conduct and integrity in the workplace.
4. **Implicit Bias:** Identify and mitigate the effects of implicit bias to ensure a more meritorious equal environment.

MODULE 2: Key Communication

This module focuses on the essential competencies of active listening, speaking to foster collaboration and candor and creating connection with colleagues. Participants will learn and practice skills to effectively communicate, grow trust and build a productive work environment.

Objectives:

1. **Listening to Learn:** Cultivate the ability to listen attentively and empathetically, ensuring clear understanding and fostering open communication within the team.
2. **Foundational Communication:** Develop skills for clear and impactful conversations, enabling participants to share their perspectives and experience with more confidence and clarity.
3. **Relationships with Colleagues:** Learn techniques to build and sustain strong, positive connections with colleagues, creating a supportive and collaborative workplace atmosphere.

MODULE 3: Thriving in Dynamic Work Environments

This module emphasizes practical training in adaptability, resiliency, and emotional intelligence, crucial for navigating today's dynamic work environments.

Objectives:

1. **Adaptability:** Equip participants with the skills to rapidly adapt to new roles, responsibilities, and changes in the workplace.
2. **Resiliency:** Strengthen participants' ability to bounce back from challenges, manage stress, and maintain a constructive attitude under pressure.
3. **Emotional Intelligence:** Develop participants' capacity for self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication, enabling them to navigate interpersonal relationships and team dynamics successfully.

MODULE 4: Mastering Time & Goals

This module explores key concepts such as time management, self-awareness, goal-setting and how to prioritize responsibilities. By the end of this module, managers will be able to manage their workload and set and achieve goals to make progress towards their long-term aspirations.

Objectives:

1. **Prioritization:** Introduce effective prioritization techniques to help participants identify and focus on high-impact tasks.
2. **Time Management:** Develop essential time management skills to enhance productivity and ensure deadlines are met.
3. **Goal Setting:** Develop the ability to set clear, achievable goals and motivate others towards accomplishing them.

MODULE 5: Foundations of Project Management

This module is designed to equip participants with essential project management skills. It focuses on foundational principles and practices to effectively lead and manage projects within the built environment. The course will cover basics for project planning, execution, and monitoring.

Objectives:

1. **Basic Business Finance:** Gain an understanding of essential financial principles, including budgeting, financial reporting, and analysis, to make informed business decisions.
2. **Basic Project Management Concepts:** Gain a thorough understanding of fundamental project management principles, including project lifecycle, scope, time, cost, and quality management, and how they apply to engineering projects.

MODULE 6: Writing for Clarity and Elevating Thought Processes

The rise of digital communication tools has amplified the challenges of written communication. Mastering concise and clear writing, from emails to reports to proposals, is a pivotal business skill. This module will delve into best practices and help attendees harness their ability to think both critically and creatively. Focusing on these traits will help improve communication and problem-solving abilities through elevated thinking.

Objectives:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Foster critical thinking abilities to enable participants to analyze situations, make informed decisions and solve problems effectively.
2. **Written Communication:** Enhance the ability to articulate ideas clearly and effectively in writing, ensuring messages are professional, concise and tailored to the audience.
3. **Problem Solving:** Apply critical thinking to analyzing and problems and developing potential solutions.

MODULE 7: Practical Practices to Enhance Performance

This module provides development on key performance skills that can be leveraged immediately by attendees. Focusing on areas that can directly impact performance in the short-term and cultivate momentum for a faster career trajectory, participants will explore strategies related to making better decisions, increasing emotional intelligence, and managing stress. Additionally, by developing these skills participants will be equipped to better navigate the social and professional dynamics related to creating a culture of accountability.

Objectives:

1. **Upholding Standards and Organizational Integrity:** Describe the science of decision making and its role in creating a culture of accountability.
2. **Building Inclusive Cultures:** Identify key elements from the first two pillars of Emotional Intelligence and how they can provide foundational support for inclusive environments.
3. **Self-Regulation and Performance:** Present at least three strategies that can be used to manage stress in the workplace.

MODULE 8: Building Connections through Listening

This module lays the groundwork for participants to understand and apply relationship-based negotiation principles and practices - key elements of effective project and talent management.

Objectives:

1. **Active Listening:** Develop skills to fully comprehend what is being said, authentically reflect and respond, and retain key information.
2. **Engagement Techniques:** Learn strategies to effectively engage colleagues and team members, fostering collaboration and teamwork.
3. **Communication:** Explore techniques for emotional intelligence in communication.

Mid-level Leaders

Mid-level Leaders - Course Description: This course is designed for mid-level leaders who are looking to refine and expand their leadership capabilities. Through case studies, role-playing, and interactive discussions, participants will deepen their understanding of leadership critical competencies, enabling them to lead more effectively in complex and dynamic work environments.

NOTE: Module titles, descriptions and order subject to change.

MODULE 1: Leading with Integrity

This module delves into advanced concepts of accountability, ethics in the workplace, professionalism and implicit bias, using artificial intelligence (AI) as a case study. It is designed to enhance the skills of experienced leaders in promoting integrity, fostering accountability, and leading inclusively.

Objectives:

1. **Accountability:** Design and strengthen systems for personal and team accountability.
2. **Ethics in Business:** Lead ethical decision-making and resolve ethical dilemmas arising during times of disruptive changes, including AI.
3. **Professionalism:** Uphold and model high standards of conduct and integrity, individually. Design systems to promote professional values.
4. **Implicit Bias:** Develop strategies to identify and counteract implicit bias, as well as monitor performance.

MODULE 2: Leadership Dynamics

This module aims to empower mid-level leaders with the advanced skills and confidence needed to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, address challenging situations, and foster a productive and supportive work environment.

Objectives:

1. **Listening to Learn:** Enhance the ability to listen attentively and empathetically, ensuring better understanding and fostering a culture of openness and curiosity.
2. **Coaching/People Management:** Learn skills to convey your perspectives and ideas for others, to listen in ways that create more engagement and buy-in.
3. **Difficult Conversations:** Develop skills to approach and navigate difficult conversations with more confidence and effectiveness, transforming potential conflicts into constructive dialogues.
4. **Relationships with Colleagues:** Learn advanced techniques for building and maintaining strong, positive relationships within the team, promoting collaboration and mutual respect.

MODULE 3: Navigating Interpersonal Dynamics

This module is to help participants to enhance their abilities in conflict management, fostering psychological safety and cultivating emotional intelligence. These skills are crucial for creating a positive and productive work environment, navigating complex interpersonal dynamics, and leading teams with empathy and understanding.

Objectives:

1. **Conflict Management:** Understand and manage conflicts within teams using effective communication and negotiation techniques.
2. **Psychological Safety:** Create an environment of psychological safety where team members feel secure to express themselves.
3. **Emotional Intelligence:** Enhance emotional intelligence by recognizing and managing one's own emotions and understanding those of others.

MODULE 4: Comprehensive Risk Management

Effective project team communication is crucial for success and a major factor in errors and omissions claims. This module will cover the risks associated with various project delivery methods and offer strategies for risk mitigation across projects, job sites, contracts, and communications. Additionally, it will address possible personnel issues and employment law to ensure comprehensive risk management.

Objectives:

1. **Risk Management – Communication:** Understand how project team communication impacts project success and the potential for errors and omissions claims.
2. **Risk Management – Projects:** Explore risk management strategies for different project delivery methods, job sites, and contractual agreements.
3. **Employment Law:** Address personnel-related risks and employment law issues to ensure a comprehensive approach to risk management.

MODULE 5: Strategic Integration

This module will elevate strategic and business development acumen by providing advanced insights into integrating project management with broader business objectives, emphasizing the development of strategic thinking and financial management skills to align project goals with organizational strategy.

Objectives:

1. **Business Development:** Develop skills to identify and capitalize on business development opportunities within the built environment, fostering client relationships and expanding market reach.
2. **Strategic Thinking:** Equip leaders with the ability to align project goals with broader organizational strategies to drive business growth and competitive advantage.
3. **Financial Management:** Strengthen financial management capabilities to effectively oversee project budgets, analyze financial performance, and make informed decisions that support project and organizational financial health.

MODULE 6: Relationship-based Negotiation

This module emphasizes the principles and practices of relationship-based negotiation, including managing emotions and biases, conducting discovery, becoming trusted advisors, building empathy and trust, and developing creative solutions with colleagues, employees, managers, and clients.

Objectives:

1. **Active Listening:** Refine emotional communications techniques.
2. **Relationship Building for Client Management:** Explore a proven model for gaining trust as consultants.
3. **Negotiating:** Understand and apply the foundational principles of relationship-based negotiation.

MODULE 7: The Consultative Mindset

The consultative mindset means understanding coworkers' or clients' unique needs, challenges and objectives before proposing solutions or engaging in strategic conversations. This perspective can foster deeper team and client relationships. This module will bring into focus the skills needed to anticipate the client's needs, pairing the consultative mindset with an entrepreneurial mindset, thus creating positive employee and client experiences.

Objectives:

1. **Consultative Mindset:** Develop the ability to understand and anticipate the unique needs, challenges, and objectives of clients to foster stronger relationships and tailor solutions effectively.
2. **Think Like an Owner:** Develop the skills to anticipate client needs by integrating a consultative mindset with an entrepreneurial approach, fostering deeper relationships and positive experiences.
3. **Relationship Building:** Use the consultative mindset to strengthen team and client relationships, ensuring solutions are tailored to their specific needs and objectives.

MODULE 8: Driving Innovation

In this module, learners explore the principles and practices of innovative thinking to drive organizational growth and problem-solving. Key topics include fostering a culture of innovation, leveraging diverse perspectives and applying design thinking methodologies.

Objectives:

1. **Innovative Mindset:** Equip leaders with techniques to foster a culture of innovation and encourage creative problem-solving within their teams.
2. **Problem Solving:** Develop skills to apply design thinking methodologies to address complex challenges and drive strategic growth.
3. **Change Management:** Enhance the ability to inspire and manage change effectively by leveraging diverse perspectives and innovative approaches.

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders - Course Description: This program is designed to enhance the skills and competencies of experienced leaders within an organization. With focuses on strategic thinking, advanced leadership techniques and organizational management, the series aims to equip senior executives with tools to lead effectively in complex environments, drive organizational change, and inspire high-performance teams. The goal is to prepare senior leaders to navigate challenges, foster a positive culture, and contribute to the organization's long-term success.

NOTE: Module titles, descriptions and order subject to change.

MODULE 1: Leading with Integrity

Designed for senior leaders responsible for guiding organizational strategy and culture, this module emphasizes leading with integrity, overseeing team-level and institutional accountability, fostering and inspiring a meritorious and inclusive culture and modeling ethical and professional decision-making individually and organizationally. It uses artificial intelligence (AI) as a case study, examining effective and responsible leadership at times of disruptive change.

Objectives:

1. **Ethics:** Set, uphold and assess the efficacy of ethical standards, guiding ethically minded organizational decision-making, consistent with merit-based and profit-maximization objectives.
2. **Culture Development:** Design, build and nurture a positive and inclusive organizational culture.
3. **Artificial Intelligence:** Understand the ethical implications and strategic use of AI in decision-making and develop effective frameworks for the incorporation of AI into organizational structure and values.

MODULE 2: Breakthrough Conversations

This module focuses exclusively on mastering the art of handling sensitive, high-stakes discussions with confidence and effectiveness. It will equip senior leaders with tools and insights needed to tackle high-stakes conversations, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability and mutual respect at the highest levels of leadership.

Objectives:

1. **High-Stakes Conversations:** Develop advanced skills to lead sensitive discussions effectively, addressing critical issues with clarity and openness.
2. **Stressful Situations:** Gain skill for navigating uncomfortable conversations, turning potentially triggering interactions into opportunities for constructive dialogue and problem-solving.
3. **Strategic Communication:** Learn to prepare for and begin important conversations with focus and clarity, engaging others in strategic dialogue and fostering conversations that are candid, positive and constructive.

MODULE 3: Leading with Psychological Safety and Emotional Intelligence

This module is tailored for senior leaders seeking to deepen their expertise in conflict management, fostering psychological safety, and enhancing emotional intelligence. These competencies are essential for leading at the strategic level, influencing organizational culture and navigating complex interpersonal and organizational dynamics.

Objectives:

1. **Conflict Management:** Master strategic conflict management techniques to address and resolve complex and high-stakes conflicts within the organization.
2. **Psychological Safety:** Cultivate an organizational culture of psychological safety that encourages innovation, accountability and open dialogue.
3. **Emotional Intelligence:** Enhance emotional intelligence to effectively lead diverse teams, navigate organizational challenges and influence stakeholders.

MODULE 4: Managing Risk - Contracts and More from Project Management to People Management

This module will review strategies for comprehensive risk mitigation, encompassing project execution, job site management and contractual obligations. Moreover, the module will address potential personnel challenges and employment law considerations, ensuring a robust framework for risk management and fostering a culture of proactive problem-solving.

Objectives:

1. **Risk Management - Projects:** Analyze the risks associated with different project delivery methods and develop advanced strategies for mitigating these risks across project phases.
2. **Risk Management – Communication:** Implement comprehensive communication protocols to enhance team collaboration and minimize errors and omissions claims.
3. **Employment Law:** Address personnel issues and employment law considerations to ensure a robust and proactive approach to risk management within project environments.

MODULE 5: Strategic Leadership Excellence

This module will equip experienced leaders with advanced skills in strategic planning, systems thinking, and change management. Participants will learn about tools and frameworks to navigate complex organizational challenges, align resources with long-term goals and drive sustainable change.

Objectives:

1. **Strategic Planning:** Learn to create, evaluate, and implement comprehensive strategic plans that align with organizational objectives and anticipate future challenges.
2. **Systems Thinking Models:** Gain proficiency in using systems thinking approaches to identify interdependencies, optimize processes and address root causes of issues within an organization.
3. **Change Management:** Acquire techniques to effectively manage and lead change, fostering a culture of adaptability and resilience in the face of organizational transformation.

MODULE 6: Advanced Negotiation Practices

This module expands on relationship-based negotiation principles and practices to enhance client collaboration, resolve conflicts, and foster a positive workplace culture.

Objectives:

1. **Active Listening:** Implement best practices for emotional communication techniques.
2. **Relationship Building for Client Management:** Explore an effective model for building trust as consultants.
3. **Strategic Negotiating:** Master advanced principles of a relationship-based negotiation model.

MODULE 7: Growth Mindset

This module explores how adopting a growth mindset can enhance leadership effectiveness by fostering inclusivity, embracing cultural diversity and nurturing a supportive and innovative work environment. It reflects the broader industry trend of valuing people-centric leadership as a key driver of organizational success.

Objectives:

1. **Growth Mindset - Firm:** Understand the importance of a growth mindset in enhancing leadership effectiveness and driving firm-wide success.
2. **Growth Mindset - People:** Explore strategies for cultivating a diverse and inclusive team culture that supports innovation and collaboration.
3. **Decision Making:** Develop actionable approaches to integrating people-centric leadership practices into everyday management and decision-making processes.

MODULE 8: Think Like an Owner

This module will emphasize the importance of adopting an owner's mindset and preparing for future challenges. Participants will delve into strategies for long-term planning, innovation and sustainability, ensuring the firm's continued growth and relevance in the built environment. Additionally, it will focus on anticipating industry trends, technological advancements and shifts in market demands.

Objectives:

1. **Thinking Like an Owner:** Learn how to drive the firm's sustainable growth and profitability.
2. **Future Challenges:** Identify and respond to emerging trends, technological advancements and shifts in the built environment industry, leveraging futurism principles to create resilient and adaptive business strategies.