



World-Renowned Nonprofit Redesigns Organizational Structure to Create a Brighter Future

**“I believe we are now stronger, more dynamic and more resilient.
We are ready to lead IIE into the next century.”**

—A. Sarah Ilchman, *Director, Student Exchanges*

In 2013, the Institute of International Education (IIE), an independent not-for-profit founded in 1919, recognized the need to evolve their business to meet changing market needs. Demographic shifts, changes in government operations and in governance itself, and technology were significant threats to IIE's future success and market growth. IIE is one of the world's largest and most experienced international education and training organizations, managing over 200 programs including the prestigious Fulbright programs for the State Department of the US government.

IIE partnered with Linkage to create a leadership development curriculum designed to equip their 650 employees with the tools and resources they needed to successfully shift the cultural mindset and create a more forward-thinking organization, focused on driving change and creating growth.

The initiative kicked off with a comprehensive review of the current state. Based on these findings, Linkage developed a unique model (see reverse) that focused on areas core to the organization's success including eight

competencies that every team member needed to master and three domains of leadership competency.

The model was used as the basis for a series of one-day in-person workshops, which were designed and delivered over 10 months by employees who were trained and certified by Linkage. The goal was to help individuals develop an awareness of the issues impacting the business and to create a learning-oriented culture. The workshops focused on the processes that would help drive improvement, break down silos, and ramp up the skills necessary to empower employees to create change.

A second one-day workshop was also developed to begin reestablishing the roles and responsibilities of what it takes to be an effective leader and manager at IIE. A third workshop, based on the evaluations from the other two, was also designed and delivered by team members on how to receive feedback. This offering was delivered by IIE-certified trainers to intact teams, starting with the vice presidents and cascading throughout each division. The uniqueness of the format created a very strong buzz in the organization and opened up lines of communication.

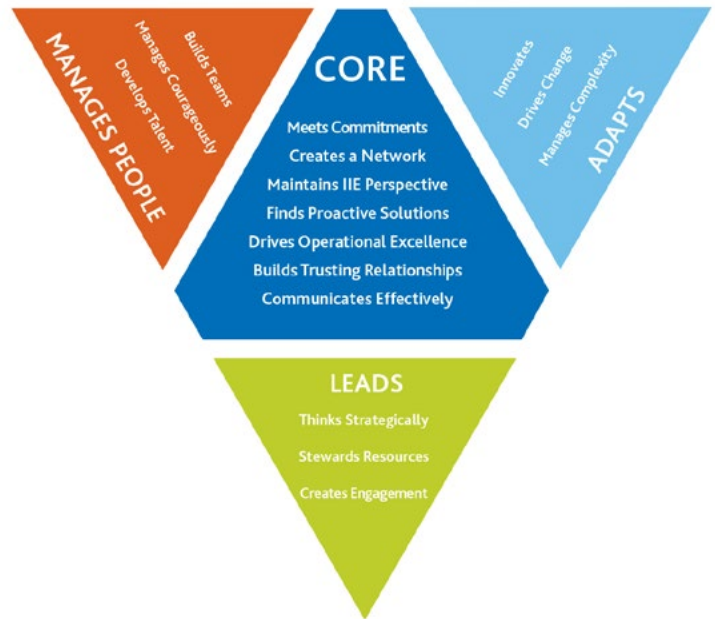
REDEFINING STRATEGY TO CREATE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

As collaboration increased and team members began to look at opportunities in other areas, a cross-functional initiative was launched to create their organizational strategy. In an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of their customers, competition, and capabilities, three teams conducted research and compiled analytics that would ultimately equip them to redefine IIE's approach. This work led them to define five unique market differentiators. Five new cross-functional teams were then led through an action learning process to address these areas. It became evident that one topic needed to take precedence: an organizational structure that would enable the strategy.

The leadership and management teams needed support to launch this effort. So, in November 2014, two cohorts of 16 high-potential leaders were selected to participate in a yearlong leadership program with three training sessions, 360° feedback, coaching, and action learning projects. In each cohort, four teams chose their area of focus, designed the project and performed the necessary activities to implement their learning.

Projects ranged from creating an onboarding and ramp-up program to a new companywide policy offering employees alternative work arrangements. Two additional cohorts were formed in November 2015 and are currently in progress. Using an action learning approach, IIE is building leadership capacity and driving collaboration across programs for a matrixed, customer-focused, and operationally excellent organization.

Finally, a group of leaders gathered at Linkage's *Global Institute for Leadership Development*®, an immersive learning program, to further assess their leadership system and organizational structure. Their experience helped inform their decision to restructure the entire organization. Five teams were then assembled to take on the assessment, design, and implementation of IIE's processes and delivery systems to its clients; in essence, redesigning the organization to build on its already exceptional client service and program management to increase reliability, consulting capability, and reach.



IIE's Professional Growth Model

CAPABLE, COMMITTED & ALIGNED

Recent employee culture and engagement survey results demonstrate positive change in core areas including better communication, more cross-functional collaboration, and a remarkable shift in mindsets, resulting in employees taking more pride and proactive ownership of their offerings.

As a result, IIE is leading its programs with more character, discipline, and courage. At the end of the 2015 fiscal year, over 50% of the open positions were filled with internal candidates and of these, 60% were cross-functional moves in what was previously a very siloed organization.

IIE has continued to build on its reputation as a world-class provider in an increasingly difficult climate. As IIE nears its centennial celebration in 2019, it is undoubtedly better equipped with the people, processes, and tools necessary to be a more capable and future-focused market leader.

At Linkage, we are passionate about developing leaders who can create lasting impact. Call +1.781.402.5555 to learn more.