

# ARCHITECTURE AND LEADERSHIP BY DESIGN

## The Prouty Project Customizes a Leadership Development Cohort for a Global Design Firm



Being a large firm with a multi-national presence is the dream of many businesses. But that dream often comes with several challenges, namely the communication, collaboration, and connection that is lost when so many leaders are operating in every corner of the world. In order for a company to continue to grow and stay connected, it's essential to develop its people, teaching them to create a connection with one another that transcends borders, crosses oceans, and circumnavigates the globe.

See how The Prouty Project helped this global design firm plan and implement a three-part leadership development program designed to enhance its leaders and create a solid connection for years to come.

### The Challenge: Creating a Custom Leadership Development Program (LDP)

With so many leaders and resources spread out across multiple regions and sectors around the world, DLR Group needed a way to create a connection between their 1,000+ employees and those who lead them. They needed to build a one-of-a-kind leadership development program. DLR Group called upon The Prouty Project to be the key instructional designers and facilitators for this custom program.

This new leadership development program was designed to build the next generation leaders, all of whom were identified by their organization. Its foundation was constructed with three critical levels of engagement in mind: Leading Self, Leading Others and Leading the Organization. Due to considerations of COVID-19, the program was delivered entirely in a virtual environment, making full creative use of experiential options to enhance the Zoom and Mural platforms. This cohort of 22 leaders from around the globe participated with the full support of their executive leadership and managing principals in highly interactive sessions. The sessions were full of music, creative pairing, medium-sized break-out rooms, and even a guest yoga practitioner to help everyone stay fresh despite the long working hours.

“Total rock stars! They (Prouty) were great facilitators and helped push us outside of our comfort zone. I think having a third party (vs. someone within the DLR Group family) to help facilitate is a key component. **It helps push the group into uncharted and uncomfortable territory.**”



### ABOUT THE DLR GROUP

DLR Group is an integrated design firm that creates breathtaking architectural designs for buildings in the public and private sectors. 100 percent employee-owned and with more than 1,000 professionals located in offices all over the world, DLR Group inspires a culture of design and has promised to elevate the human experience through the high-performance buildings that are created for a sustainable future.

Integration and collaboration are key values for this Prouty client, which is why they felt it important to blaze forward with an internal leadership program to elevate the experiences of their employees.





## 1: Leading Self

Leading Self provided the foundation of emotional intelligence for DLR Group leaders to take ownership of themselves as leaders in the process. Through enhanced self-awareness, Prouty helped these leaders better appreciate their strengths and challenges and, through self-management, helped them better adjust their behaviors at home and in the workplace, and developed a deeper capacity for empathy, both personal and organizational. This was a critical component in creating the best solutions for the architectural designers at DLR Group.

A key component of the Leading Self phase was introducing the Insights Discovery tool, which helps people not only identify who they are and how they best communicate, but also gives them an invaluable toolkit to identify others and how they best communicate in the workplace. This tool serves as a foundational mindset for everything they do with clients going forward.

“I think all leaders within DLR Group should go through this program. It definitely **equips you to take on something larger by helping you better understand yourself and giving you the tools to improve** where needed.”

## 2: Leading Others

Leading Others provided the laboratory for leadership as a practice. This segment featured a myriad of opportunities to enable DLR Group’s leaders to help others gain the confidence to try and give them new tools, skills and mindsets, all of which are crucial to success.

By introducing key leadership elements like team formation dynamics, conflict management and peer and direct report coaching tools, the leaders continually add to their leadership backpacks and have opportunities to practice them between sessions.

“I find myself referring back to lessons learned at least once a week! It has provided a lot of food for thought in terms of **how I lead my team of direct reports and how I approach problem-solving.**”

“This program has allowed me to **focus on skills that I didn’t put much thought into before.** I still have a long way to go, but I am so thankful for the opportunity to get on the right track!”





### 3: Leading the Business

Leading the Business helped each participant gain a better sense of an enterprise-wide mindset which helped them better understand what it takes to make decisions on behalf of their organization.

In the Leading the Business section, intense focus was directed on tools and activities in the strategic planning process which help people rise up and take a more enterprise-wide view of decision-making. By working in small teams throughout the entire program, they were able to explore five key leadership initiatives and then present them in an impressive graduation ceremony.

“The business case was the highlight of the LDP [Leadership Development Program] for me! The perfect way to **apply what we learned about ourselves and teams** and apply it to benefit the enterprise. LOVED IT!!”

### Breaking Down Barriers and Creating a Connection

From the inception of this program, a connection was created between these leaders in every region around the world. The highly interactive nature of the instructional design has helped leaders bond in a way that has lasted and is continuously improving. The program is now in its second year and graduates from the first cohort have volunteered to assist as coaches for the upcoming cohort.

Developing people first is a market differentiator. Company decisions bring people in and create a “destination” for those looking to find a positive, team-centered work environment. Investing in these tools promotes success in individuals, teams, and the business at large. It’s a WIN-WIN-WIN. DLR Group is seeing this firsthand, and their employees participating in this program are vocalizing the importance and takeaways from these efforts.

“It was a very effective use of time. I especially needed the **connection to other leaders** during the pandemic. I spend so much of my energy worrying about my team, and this gave me connections to other leaders in the same position. Thank you.”

“I am truly grateful to be given the opportunity to participate in this program. **It really was life changing.** And I am so excited to see how it will change our firm. Thank you!”





## A Recent Graduate from the Leadership Development Program Said it well:

"I got permission, and even a mandate, to take time to focus on growing myself as a leader. The LDP program made me surface out of my day-to-day frantic pace to stop, breathe, and look holistically at how I can help improve myself, my team, and DLR Group.

The insights into personalities and team interaction completely transformed my approach to my coworkers. As soon as LDP was complete, prior to becoming a national DLR Group initiative, my team rolled out Insights. This was not a top-down mandate but rather my team saw how I was using it, heard the principals talking about it, and really felt they wanted the same personal growth.

The connections to other leaders across the country instantly came in handy. So many resources at DLR Group are dispersed across regions and sectors, and without the cross connection provided by the LDP it is difficult to even know whom to reach out to. Also, during the isolation of COVID-19, I cannot overestimate the connections to other leaders also trying to be brave and also trying to encourage their teams. It was a great support to me."

- Carmen Wyckoff, AIA, Principal at DLR Group

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