



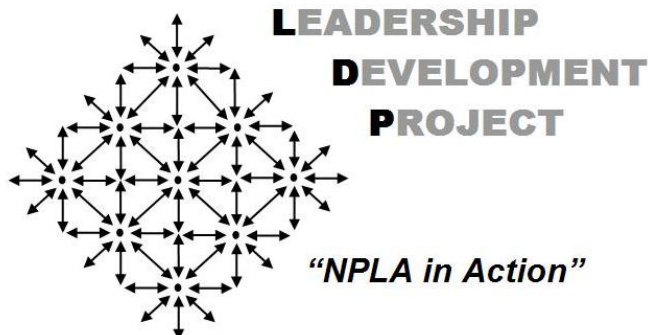
# Coaching Your Leadership Team

## Task Design

### Participant Guide

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Module Three,  
Part 4



# **Leadership Development Project**

## **Skills Workshop: Motivational Task Design**

### **Learning Handout**

#### **Framing:**

#### ***Why do we need to design tasks motivationally?***

- You need to choose a new committee chair, but don't have any idea who would be most qualified except for their knowledge of the issue. But research skills are not the same kind of skills needed to lead a committee. What do you do?
- You've been doing well at recruiting new volunteers but they only show up to phone bank once or twice and you never hear from them again? How can you keep them coming back?
- You have one person who "always" runs the tabling operation but they're gone for the year. How do you replace them? And, come to think of it, they and a couple of their close friends are the only ones who ever show up to do tabling. Could this be an opportunity?
- It gets pretty tiring, having to tell everyone exactly how to do their work – whether it's the check-ins for a conference, getting the food lined up for a celebration, planning for a hearing. How come I always have to tell everyone exactly how to do these jobs when they ought to know how to do it? People just don't care, do they?

You can meet these challenges by making sure your ExCom members learn how to design tasks that insure high quality work by making full use of your resources that motivate those who perform them, and that create more opportunities for leadership development.

#### ***How does motivational task design work?***

*Remember the key components of motivational task design, all three of which must be present?*

- Experienced meaningfulness: the task is important in the overall scheme of things.
- Experienced responsibility: how well the task gets done is up to me.
- Experiences results: as I do the work I can see whether or not I'm doing it well.

We also reviewed the way we had to design work so as to produce this kind of motivation:

- Task identity- getting to do the whole thing from start to finish.
- Task significance – understanding and seeing the direct impact of the work on the world.
- Skill variety – engaging a variety of skills, including heart, hands, and brain.
- Autonomy – having the space to make competent choices about how to do the work.
- Feedback – results that are visible to the person performing the task, even as they perform.

We can evaluate tasks to determine how motivational they are, redesign them to make them more motivational, and construct them so as to create a leadership ladder, opportunity for people to earn greater responsibilities.

### ***When can we make good use of motivational task design?***

- Whenever we initiate a new program, launch a campaign, or undertake a project so we design it “right” from the beginning.
- When the way we do the things we do the most of (phone banking, tabling, letter writing) could be made far more productive, could engage more people, and could create opportunity for more leadership to develop.

### **Practicum:**

#### ***Demonstrate the Skill:***

Trainer uses diagnostic check list to lead the group in evaluation of an agreed upon task, such as phone banking.

#### ***Practice the Skill:***

Break out participants into teams of four. The use the task redesign ladder to redesign an agreed upon task of their own choosing, on which they report out.

### ***How can task design be useful to your team?***

- Whenever we initiate a new program, launch a campaign, or undertake a project so we design it “right” from the beginning.
- When the way we do the things we do the most of (phone banking, tabling, letter writing) could be made far more productive, could engage more people, and could create opportunity for more leadership to develop.

### ***What are some examples of specific ways task design could be introduced into your team work?***

- Schedule task design reviews of the most common tasks your ExCom mobilizes people to do, perhaps one every other month, but on a regular basis.
- Commit your ExCom to a work design evaluation of the ExCom itself, how work is divided up, etc.

- Commit your ExCom to turning to you to lead them in task design considerations of any new program they undertake.

### ***What commitment is required of the coach?***

- To take initiative in identifying opportunities for the team to make use of task design.
- To practice telling his or her own story to develop mastery of task design.
- To coach team members in doing task design.

### ***What commitment is required of the team?***

- To work with the coach to identify opportunities to use task design.
- To find ways to build task design into their work as a team.
- To create learning opportunities for team members to work with the coach.

### **Additional Materials**

- Task Diagnostic Check List
- Task Redesign Ladder

### **For Further Reading:**

1. Richard Hackman. “Redesigning Work for Individuals and Groups”, 2006.
2. “The Volunteer”, Sierra Club Case, 2006.

## RIO GRANDE PHONE BANK TASK REDESIGN

|                          | <b>Level One</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Level Two</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Level 3</b>                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Task Identity</b>     | Give new volunteers responsibility for identifying the best targets to call, brainstorm ideas for the script as a team                                                                                                                                                   | They are in charge of Level 1 volunteers                                                                                                                                   | They are responsible for the entire phone bank                                                                     |
| <b>Task Significance</b> | Brief new volunteers on the importance of the phone bank, share polling data on the impact of calling with them, let them know that one vote makes a difference, share past successes, have the candidate you are phone banking for make an appearance at the phone bank | They are empowering new volunteers                                                                                                                                         | They empower the Level 2 volunteers, meet with candidates                                                          |
| <b>Skill Variety</b>     | Give new volunteers a role in writing the phone script                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Level 2 volunteers recruit Level 1 volunteers, talk about their experience as a Level 1 volunteer, greet people, distribute phone lists, trouble shoot, and problem solve. | Level 3 volunteers will have additional tasks related to organizing rallies, working with the ExCom and canvassing |
| <b>Autonomy</b>          | Let them brainstorm ideas for the script, give them latitude on what to say on the phone                                                                                                                                                                                 | In answering questions, they can draw upon their experience and use their judgment                                                                                         | They set the goals and plans for the phone bank                                                                    |
| <b>Feedback</b>          | Give each volunteer a phone bank sheet to complete as they go through their calls, draw a big thermometer on the wall and fill it in throughout the evening.                                                                                                             | They act as conduit to both give and receive feedback, moves the thermometer up.                                                                                           | They hold regular meetings with the Level 2 volunteers, walk the floor and makes some calls                        |

## KEY LESSONS FROM THE EXERCISE

1. We can give Level 1 volunteers more responsibility and autonomy than we thought.
2. We now understand the possibilities for progression of volunteers by seeing it as a continuous process of brining volunteers up the ladder.
3. There is a link between redesigning volunteer tasks and improving phonebanking outcomes.

### FLIPCHART SET-UP

#### Task Redesign/Ladder

|    | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|----|---------|---------|---------|
| TI |         |         |         |
| TS |         |         |         |
| SV |         |         |         |
| A  |         |         |         |
| F  |         |         |         |

## Task Design Ratings: Diagnostic Checklist

### Skill variety:

How much *skill variety* is there in the task this person is asked to do? That is, to what extent does the task require this person to do many different things, using a variety of skills and talents (including both hands and brain)?

- 1 Very little; the task requires the person to do the same routine things over and over again
- 2 A bit
- 3 Moderate variety
- 4 Significant variety
- 5 Very much; the task requires this person to do many different things, using a number of different skills and talents

### Task identity:

To what extent does this task involve doing a "whole" and identifiable piece of work? That is, is the task a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end, or is it only a small part of an overall task, which is finished by other people?

- 1 The task is only a tiny part of the overall piece of work; the results of this person's Activities cannot easily be identified in the final product or service
- 2 A very modest piece
- 3 The task is a moderate-sized "chunk" of the overall piece of work; this person's own Contribution can be seen in the final outcome
- 4 Almost a whole piece
- 5 The task involves doing the whole piece of work, from start to finish; the results of this Person's activities are essentially the final product or service

### Task Significance:

In general, how significant or important is the task? That is, are the results of the task likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being or work of other people?

- 1 Not very significant; the outcomes of the work are not likely to have important effects on any one else
- 2 Some small significance can be seen
- 3 Moderately significant
- 4 Significant
- 5 Highly significant; the outcomes of the work obviously affect others in very important ways

### Autonomy:

How much autonomy is there in the task? That is, to what extent does the task permit this person to make significant decisions about how to go about doing it?

- 1 Very little; the task gives almost no personal "say" about how and when the work is done. Details are specified by others
- 2 A modest amount of autonomy
- 3 Moderate autonomy; many things are standardized and not under my control, but I can make some decisions
- 4 Significant autonomy but some detail specified by others
- 5 Very much; the task gives me almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is done

### Feedback:

To what extent does doing the task itself provide information about this person's performance? That is, does the actual task itself provide clues about how well one is doing - aside from any feedback other people may provide?

- 1 None; the task itself is set up so that someone could work at it forever without finding out how well he or she is doing
- 2 A small amount of information about progress or performance
- 3 Moderately; sometimes doing the work provides feedback; sometimes it does not
- 4 Significant but periodic feedback
- 5 Very much; the task is set up so that one can get almost constant feedback as one works about how well one is performance

# Task Design and Motivation

