

Reinvent performance management

Global technology company maximizes employee engagement and productivity

88% increase in engagement levels

The project

To maintain Juniper Networks' ongoing commitment to increase manager effectiveness in leading and developing talent, they collaborated with NeuroLeadership group to design an initiative to enhance the quality of interaction in the workplace. The organization operates in a highly competitive industry and being able to successfully drive and manage change and innovation are considered critical skills for all managers. Using research from neuroscience was a core component in this initiative and vital in achieving the organization's objectives of maximizing employee engagement and productivity.

Key objectives

The three objectives of the *Neuroscience of Quality Conversation* program were to help managers increase their effectiveness in leading conversations that:

- Deepen the climate of innovation and creativity
- Facilitate positive change
- Coach for high performance

Juniper's definition of a quality conversation was 'a conversation that resulted in improved thinking, creating a climate of innovation and engagement.' Quality conversation was encouraged amongst colleagues (direct reports), peers and customers. These conversations include discussing performance with a team member, giving everyday feedback, planning a project with a colleague, collaborating with a customer or running a meeting.

The program provided managers with the latest neuroscience research relating to human performance as well as conversation models which allow managers be more adaptive in their approach when leading and growing organizational talent. Managers learned core conversation skills to quickly move others from an impasse toward insight and motivated action, ultimately the development of new habits. Benefits of this approach include increasing the ability of a colleague or direct report to think through situations on their own, resulting in higher levels of staff engagement.

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Feedback from participant peers/colleagues

When asked: 'What specifically is your peer/colleague doing differently since completing the training?' responses included:

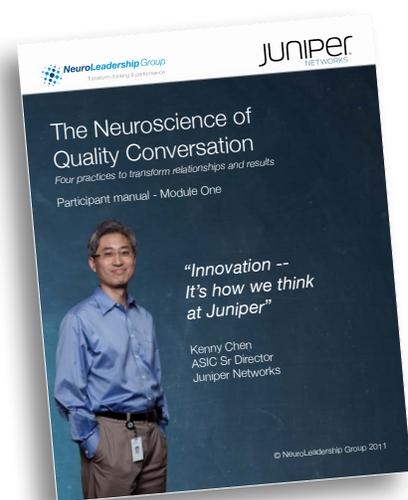
"Listening to my point of view and understanding my requirements better, acting in a supporting role and being visibly supportive."

"Being more available and open to having a conversation, more self-aware of impact on others."

"My manager appreciates more the work we do and tries to explain why certain decisions have been taken by the management."

"More thoughtful and considerate of others. More able to focus on things within their control and not worry so much about things outside their sphere of influence."

"I feel better supported and empowered."



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Key outcomes and findings

Participant peers/colleagues

- 88% reported increase in engagement levels
- 75% reported peers/colleagues enhanced ability to facilitate positive change
- 75% reported increased quality of work relationships
- 75% reported being happier at work

Participants

- 90% reported using new skills in daily interactions
- 84% reported improvement in leadership skills
- 75% reported improvement in ability to coach for high performance
- 70% reported improvement in ability to facilitate positive change
- 70% reported improvement in ability to deepen climate of innovation and creativity

About the intervention

In the first 60 days of the initiative a custom program was developed and three pilot sessions were delivered to 45 managers worldwide. The program was four teleconference classes (1.5 hours each) in groups of 16 participants and utilized NeuroLeadership Institute's HIVE (High Impact Virtual Experience) technology.

NLI also conducted a train-the-trainer process for four Juniper internal facilitators, allowing the organization to continue to delivering the program to managers worldwide.

Participant feedback

"I understood that whatever we do or react to in our daily life has a scientific reason to it and knowing the science behind helps me understand situations better, reflect on the issue and come up with a solution with the help of my audience."

"It has definitely provided a very useful framework and set of tools. The one thing I knew but this has underlined is that I need to do less of the talking."

"By applying the things discussed in the training session, issues are resolved quicker as there is consensus to a suggested solution with all individuals participating actively in the conversation."

"Improved conversations that deliver positive engagement, commitment and execution."

"I am listening more and ask more questions before making any statement. I am also focussing on creating a positive atmosphere when talking to my direct reports."

"I give more consideration to other's thought processes during conversations."

"The training has helped me frame conversations around performance and career at the beginning to enable better dialog with my team. I have also become very aware of when this doesn't happen from senior management and better understand why people are so affected by change."

