

THE CHANGE  
CHAMPION'S  
FIELD GUIDE

FOREWORD BY W. MARKER BURKE, PH.D.

**THE CHANGE**  
**CHAMPION'S**  
**FIELD GUIDE**

Strategies and Tools for Leading Change in Your Organization

SECOND EDITION

THE CHANGE  
CHAMPION'S  
FIELD GUIDE

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# Case Study 1: Action Learning in Action\*

## Crack the Code at Bank of America

*Eryn O'Brien and Steve R. Terrell*

### OVERVIEW

A case study on how Bank of America optimized the investment in learning by creating an action learning approach that develops a cadre of leaders for the organization's future.

### CRACK THE CODE OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

#### Purpose

The passage of the Interstate Banking and Branch Efficiency Act (IBBEA) of 1994 streamlined and simplified the process for bank holding companies to consolidate bank charters within the holding companies. Banks could now more easily expand across many states and operate as a national organization instead of separate entities in each state. The rise of interstate banking from 1994 to 2003 saw the total number of banks of all sizes in the United States decline from 11,563 to 8,254,

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\*This chapter is supportive of Chapters Fourteen, Twenty, Twenty-One, and Thirty-Seven.

while total assets in the U.S. banking system roughly doubled from \$3.75 trillion to \$7.66 trillion. Hugh McColl, CEO of Bank of America (BAC) at the time, was one of the chief proponents for the passage of IBBEA and quickly focused on building out his vision for nationwide banking to increase ease and access for customers. By 2003, Bank of America had grown through acquisitions from \$147b assets, operating in ten states with 57,463 employees, to \$736b assets, operating in twenty-one states and thirty countries with 133,500 employees. Through McColl's focus, Bank of America's assets grew four times faster than those of the overall banking industry over the same time frame.

As the company grew, the need to quickly build capabilities within the employee base grew as well. The company's swift growth spawned multiple learning organizations that supported lines of business independently. As the company refined its goals from solely competing on scope and scale to becoming the most admired financial services company in the world, it became clear that the company had to optimize the investment in and management of its learning capabilities to drive organic growth of the business, improve productivity year over year, and dramatically increase customer/client satisfaction. This included building of processes, tools, programs, and technology relating to the design, development, and administration of learning to more consistently build employee capabilities across the enterprise. The design and development of high-quality learning, and the effective administration of learning, were vital to building employee capabilities and achieving the company's objectives.

The learning organization at Bank of America was in a challenging situation by 2003. Investment in learning was significant, yet the company lagged peer organizations in efficiency and effectiveness. More than 70 percent of training was classroom instructor-led/leader-led, which was seen as less effective and more costly than other alternatives. Content deliverable dates were only met half of the time. The average shelf life of a learning program was only three to six months, instead of the typical practice of six to twelve months. Multiple, non-standardized learning processes across lines of business were perceived as driving significant variation in user experience. The learning administration processes and infrastructure were inefficient and inconsistent, while the company's learning technology limited its ability to deliver fast, cost-effective, and high-quality learning to its employees.

Kenneth D. Lewis, who succeeded McColl as Bank of America's CEO, was a strong advocate for learning within the company. In 2003, he sponsored an

initiative called “Crack the Code.” The purpose of this action learning program was to “harness the strength and knowledge of our next generation of learning leaders to generate solutions and fresh approaches to resolve the one or two tough learning issues that impact Bank of America.” Twenty-seven high-potential employees from the various learning organizations throughout the bank were invited to participate.

### **Project Goals and Objectives**

The project was designed to be both an important business initiative whose outcomes would have a significant impact on the capabilities of the organization and a learning initiative that would accelerate and drive the leadership capabilities of the participants.

The goals of “Crack the Code” were two-fold:

- Recommend approaches to optimize the investment in and management of key learning processes, tools, programs, and learning technology for lines of business and the enterprise to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, and
- Provide a challenging developmental experience for a team of strong leaders in the learning organization.

At the time, Bank of America was committed to application of Six Sigma methodologies to improve its overall operational effectiveness and efficiency. The participants in Crack the Code used the Six Sigma DMAIC (define, measure, analyze, improve, and control) framework and related tools to guide their data gathering, analysis, and identification of solutions to optimize the learning investment. The DMAIC framework was used to:

- Clearly define key improvement opportunities in how the BAC learning organization manages “learning administration” in the lines of business and the enterprise (business challenge 1);
- Clearly define key improvement opportunities in how the BAC learning organization manages “learning design, development, and delivery” in the lines of business and the enterprise (business challenge 2);
- Gather feedback from internal clients, benchmark best practice companies and best practices, and develop a fact-based understanding of the current situation within BAC; and

- Recommend specific solutions to address the identified business challenges, and present those recommendations to the learning leaders and line of business partners.

There were also clear learning objectives outlined for the participants, which included:

- Gain an increased understanding of the learning organization's critical business challenges and their impact on the business;
- Develop a deeper and broader understanding of how learning currently supports the bank's and the lines of business strategic objectives;
- Enhance their ability to apply Six Sigma methods and tools to address critical business challenges; and
- Build increased knowledge of best practice companies and best/innovative practices in learning and develop a point of view on how they can be effectively implemented at BAC.

## OVERALL PROCESS

### An Overview of Six Sigma Methodology

Six Sigma is a process improvement discipline that uses facts and data to meet customer needs and requirements. It utilizes the DMAIC methodology as a structured approach to assess, improve, and control business processes. Bank of America had recently adopted the use of this discipline to generate improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of a variety of operational processes, as well as to drive cost savings, increased revenues, and improved customer satisfaction. The team followed the DMAIC methodology in structuring its work.

The *define* phase is all about project definition. In the define phase, the focus was to define and gain approval for the project's charter. Key deliverables included defining the project's scope, purpose, and business value. Key metrics (primary and secondary) were developed and financial benefits forecast. Project risks were identified as well as mitigation strategies for significant risk items. The team conducted voice of the customer (VOC) interviews, during which they talked with key stakeholders across business functions and roles to understand the factors that were critical to quality (CTQs).

The *measure* phase, as its name implies, is about measurement. During the measure phase, the team mapped the detailed process flow for the current learning processes and sub-processes to assess how effectively current approaches met the stakeholder requirements (CTQs). For example, the team conducted surveys and interviews to ask about the relative importance of factors such as speed, accuracy, flexibility, scalability, accessibility, integration, and segmentation. At this stage, the team also compared internal processes to benchmarking reports of best practices in the industry to identify additional gaps.

In the *analyze* phase, the team completed high-level and detailed designs of potential future states. Members conducted a detailed analysis of select opportunities to design the future state.

The main purpose of the *improve* phase was to identify and validate the most appropriate solution. In the improve stage, the team built, tested, and piloted design options as well as prepared to deploy the selected solution on a full scale.

Finally, the *control* phase of DMAIC is best summarized using three words: control, deploy, and close. A control plan was developed that outlined statistical process control methods to monitor how well the solution met the intended metrics. The solution was then deployed according to the requirements of the implementation plan. Finally, a formal project closure was carried out whereby project responsibilities transferred from the project team to business-as-usual responsibilities within the learning organization.

### **Action Learning Program Framework**

Bank of America had grown rapidly through acquisition over a period of ten years, and the learning functions from the acquired organizations were not integrated or aligned. Each organization operated separately and continued to serve the organizational segment it served prior to joining Bank of America. Although the leaders of these learning functions were loosely aligned and tried to coordinate on certain activities, they existed to serve their primary constituencies and took direction from those businesses. As a result, there were many divergent perspectives and priorities in relation to learning throughout the organization. Many redundant processes and training programs existed, and these complexities caused confusion for the employee end-user on what and where to access the learning he or she wanted. These redundancies also resulted in unnecessary spending on design, development, and administration of learning solutions.



The absence of a central learning function or a single head of learning led to the creation of an alliance among the various learning organizations' leaders to look for opportunities to better leverage resources and share best practices. The program sponsor, who took on the responsibilities of a chief learning officer, invited line of business and function learning leaders to form a steering committee that would guide the design, development, and implementation of the Crack the Code program. This steering committee worked with a team of external learning design and development experts and consultants and internal Six Sigma technology and finance experts in all aspects of the program. This cross-functional team was essential to effective design, development, and implementation of the program.

The overall program sponsor and the steering committee consisted of the heads of learning for the various businesses and functions. Each action learning team was assigned one of the two business challenges (learning administration or learning design and development). Each team was led by a team sponsor, who was one of the more senior learning leaders whose organization comprised a significant portion of the learning investment and target audience for the company. Team members were selected based on their history of strong performance and potential to fulfill a greater role within the company in the future. They were assigned to teams based on their roles in the company and expertise in the team challenge.

Supporting team members provided functional expertise in support of each of the teams. These roles included:

- An overall process and learning designer/facilitator, whose job was to create the overall learning process, manage the flow of action, facilitate the participants achieving their objectives, monitor the overall process, and modify the program design as appropriate;
- An external process/technical coach whose role was to facilitate team efforts to complete agreed deliverables and to provide content-related insights and experience to assist the teams;
- Quality and productivity resources providing guidance on use of Six Sigma tools and methods;
- A technology partner to provide a single point of contact for questions relating to existing technology support for learning and review team recommendations;
- A finance partner to act as a single point of contact for questions relating to the current cost of providing learning services and review team recommendations; and

- A program office to provide scheduling, logistics, production, and technical support. Aspire Consulting, Accenture, and DDI provided external learning expertise.

Crack the Code unfolded over a period of approximately three months, after the up-front planning, design, and development were completed, as shown in Figure 38.1.

The program flow occurred through three face-to-face learning and work sessions comprised of the entire group and intense individual and teamwork between the formal sessions. The sequence of sessions is described below:

- *Pre-Session:* Prior to the first session, participants completed pre-readings (such as the most recent American Society for Training and Development [ASTD] Industry report on trends in employer-provided training) and online tutorials (such as Six Sigma) to establish a baseline of knowledge within the participant group and joined a program “launch” conference call to set the stage for the program and first session.
- *Session 1: Define the Business Challenge:* The intent of the first session was to build participants’ knowledge about the business challenges and enable them to undertake the work of the project according to bank expectations.
- *Benchmark: Determine Current Reality:* Following Session 1, each team implemented its work plan to gather information and work through the Six Sigma process, meeting regularly to report on the information they had gathered. The goal was to develop their initial “theory of the case” and identify preliminary recommendations for discussion in Session 2.
- *Session 2: Build Solutions (Check-In Meeting):* This session enabled participants to fine-tune and sharpen the description and scope of the business challenge; discuss data and findings obtained from data-gathering; discuss potential solutions/recommendations; obtain feedback and coaching from the program sponsors; identify next steps needed to develop final deliverables; discuss progress on individual and team learning objectives; assess team effectiveness at working together to achieve the team’s objectives; and identify actions needed to enhance/improve team effectiveness/productivity.
- *Build Solutions: Define the Future:* Participants gathered additional information as needed; analyzed and synthesized information to further focus the scope of

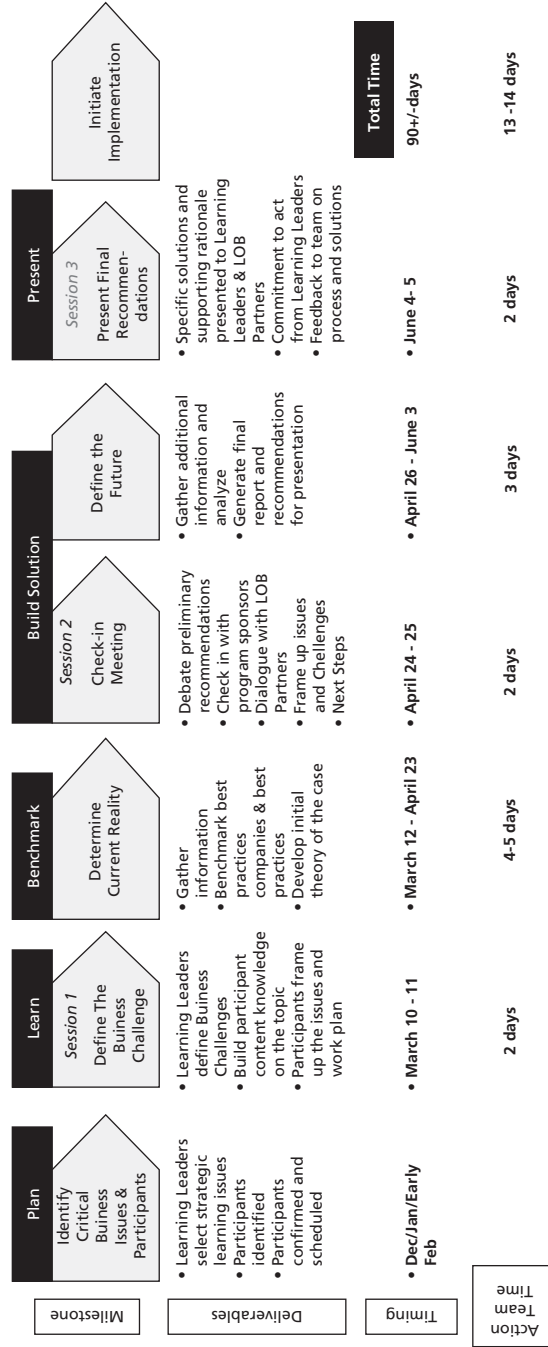


Figure 38.1. Process Map for Crack the Code

the business challenge; developed the final description of the business challenge; and developed final recommendations to address the business challenge.

- *Session 3: Present Final Recommendations:* Participants presented business challenges and one integrated set of actionable final recommendations to address the business challenges:
  - Learning leaders committed to take action on approved recommendations and provided feedback to teams on process and recommendations/solutions.
  - Team members assessed achievement of individual and team learning objectives, evaluating progress against the objectives at the conclusion of the program.
  - Teams assessed their effectiveness at working together to achieve their objectives and provided individual feedback to each other.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND KEY FINDINGS

### Diagnosis of the Situation

The action learning team members diagnosed the situation during the “Benchmark: Determine Current Reality” and “Session 2: Build Solutions” phases of the program.

Using industry benchmarks, feedback from key stakeholders, and Six Sigma tools such as the quality function deployment (QFD) methodology, the learning administration team identified the primary problem areas on which to focus as inconsistent, incomplete, and non-integrated processes across lines of businesses. These resulted in lost productivity, increased costs, and decreased asset utilization. Cracking the Code around learning administration meant improving the speed and ease of tracking and reporting learner activity, delivering a consistent, higher-quality user experience, and leveraging technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness of administrative activities.

The learning design and development team used similar tools and processes to those used by the learning administration team and focused their efforts on the need to better optimize the investment in and management of processes, tools, programs, and learning technology related to learning design and development. Cracking the Code on learning design and development meant shortening time-to-employee competency and enhancing employee productivity by improving the pace and quality of learning content delivered.

## MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

### Learning Administration

The learning administration team completed process maps for key steps in the learning process for each line of business and function, including course set-up, session logistics management, training program communications, course enrollment, and data reporting on course completions and evaluations. Significant variability was observed in how these actions were completed, as well as who was responsible for completing them. In addition, the team summarized the potential process defects and failure effects for the various process functions. As an example, one “defect” identified was a lack of data standardization in reporting, and the “failure effect” was a loss of credibility when different reports showed different information for what appeared to be the same question being asked. The process is shown in Exhibit 38.1.

Exhibit 38.1: Learning Administration Process Map 1						
Process Step	1.0 Setup/Maintain Course			2.0 Manage Logistics	3.0 Market & Communicate	
SubProcess	1.1 Provide Course Description	1.2 Add to Catalogue	1.3 Release to Production	2.1 Establish Session Logistics	3.1 Communicate Session Availability	
Who	Banking Center	GTM, RTM	Training Coordinator		GTM/RM, Coordinator	
	Consumer Products	Content Developer	Info Mgmt Analyst	Project Manager	Training Manager	
	Investment Banking	Course Owner	Learning Admin	Webmaster	Performance Consultant	Training Manager
	Tech & Ops	Curriculum Owner	System Administrator		Curriculum Owner/Delivery	Capacity Mgmt, Web Master
How	Banking Center	Email, Paper	Online, Email	Online	Online, Email, Phone	Email, Phone
	Consumer Products	Email	Online	Online	Online	Online, Email
	Investment Banking	Fax, Email	Online, Email	Online	Online, Email	Online, Email, Phone
	Tech & Ops	Online	Online	Online	Email	Email
Technology	Banking Center	N/A	Edcor TAO	Edcor	Edcor TAO	TAO
	Consumer Products	N/A	CPT&D Website	Edcor	Edcor	CPT&D Website
	Investment Banking	N/A	CMA	2Way CMA	CMA	GCIB Website
	Tech & Ops	LSS Website	ONTrack Online Virtual Campus	Virtual Campus	ONTrackOnline	Virtual Campus

The learning administration team also gathered voice of the customer data from various stakeholders to identify and prioritize factors critical to the

quality (CTQs) of the administration process. Three factors rose to the top of the priority list:

- *Speed*: Systems, processes, data, and training program information had to be available in a timely manner. In the current state, there were significant manual processes, duplicate processes, and difficulty with systems access that significantly increased the time it took to find and complete the information needed.
- *Accuracy*: Training data, reports, course participation, and certification training had to be more accurate. Again, inaccurate or incomplete information was presented as a result of many manual input processes and lack of agreement on where/how to pull data.
- *Ease*: Employee ability to self-administer training had to be enhanced. Given limited systems access and limited awareness of how to navigate the system, it was difficult for employees to manage their own development and the development of their teams. Enrollment, access to training systems, and reporting had to be simpler.

In addition, the team identified that the systems and processes had to be flexible and scalable to meet new and changing business needs. This flexibility would allow the company to maintain operational efficiency as well as deliver solutions that were cost-effective and provide positive ROI.

### **Learning Design and Development**

The learning design and development team completed process maps for key steps in the learning process for each line of business and function (Exhibit 38.2). These included learning requirements analysis, content design, content development, content production, and feedback evaluation. While some teams had standard tools and processes within their teams, significant variability was seen across learning teams in how this work was completed and who was responsible. The technology available to support these processes also varied significantly across teams.

The design and development team also summarized the potential process defects and failure effects for the various process functions. Defects in these processes primarily resulted in quality and cost concerns, such as turnaround times too tight to deliver the optimal solution or duplicate work, as the same work was being completed by multiple teams.

## Exhibit 38.2. Learning Design and Development Process Map

Process Step	1.0 Analyze Learning Requirements		
SubProcess	1.1 Identify Learning Need	1.2 Develop Learning Plan	1.3 Complete Detailed Analysis
<b>Who</b>			
Banking Center	GTM, RTM, PM	PM/ID	ID/PM
Consumer Products	RM, PM, ID	RM	ID
Investment Banking	L&OE RM/Learning Board	L&OE	Aligned LOB team
Tech & Ops	L&OE RM/PC	LA	LA
<b>How</b>			
Banking Center	LOB contacts GTM, RM, PM	Define project scope	Complete audience analysis, content outline, high level objectives, create timeline and get approvals
Consumer Products	LOB contacts RM or project already identified	Define high level scope	Determine audience impact
Investment Banking	LOB contacts RM; LOB Hoshin Plan	Define objectives and metrics to address Hoshinplan gaps	Determine buy vs. build vs. reuse
Tech & Ops	LOB contacts RM/PC	Create statement of work with high level estimates for solution, objectives, costs, resources, time	Detailed analysis including audience, task
<b>Tools</b>			
Banking Center	Performance Relationship Map, Assessment Checklist	Approach/Scope document	Operational Design, Business Reqs, Training Assessment, Resource Req, Communication Plan
Consumer Products	Training Needs Assessment	High level scope/Training Request form	Training Needs Assessment
Investment Banking	Competency Plans, Hoshin Plan, Regulatory Evaluation	Pre-Assessment, Best Practices, SMEs	Time/Resource vs. Cost
Tech & Ops	Hoshin Plan, LOB, Prioritized learning plan	Statement of Work	Learning Assessment

Three factors rose to the top of the priority list as a result of voice of the customer data gathered by the learning design and development team:

- **Accuracy:** Inaccurate materials impacted employee productivity. The right information wasn't always clear or available to the right person at the right time. Inaccurate training materials negatively impacted employees' ability to perform the skill appropriately, reduced employee productivity, and negatively impacted the credibility of the learning team.
- **Processes:** Content design and development processes had to be more efficient and simpler to follow. Specifically, the need to more easily maintain and update content was called out, as well as the need to more easily find existing content to foster reuse. Varied and inconsistent processes and limited use of technology drove up variability and rework.
- **Accessibility:** Learning professionals rated the ability to access, update, and reuse content as "ineffective." Content design and development tools and templates had to be easier to access and structured to facilitate the reuse of content as appropriate.

## METRICS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING ANALYSES

The learning administration team used Six Sigma tools such as a cause and effect matrix to evaluate and rank the effect of various process outputs on the CTQs identified by the stakeholders. Four key metrics rose to the top as key indicators of overall effectiveness:

- Satisfaction with learning administration, measured via employee surveys and focus groups, which identified people's perceptions of the effectiveness and ease of their learning experience;
- Number of touch points/systems of record indicating the amount of effort required to complete learning;
- Percentage of customer requests filled on time measured the actual time required to meet a need; and
- User time assessed the speed and ease for learners to complete tactical activities required to access and complete their training (for example, number of clicks required to find required content).

Extreme variability was seen in each of these metrics by line of business given the variability in processes and technologies used by line of business. Industry metrics were gathered from a targeted list of competitors on these same areas to identify potential benchmarks for the target go-forward plan. The team concluded that not only were administration processes too cumbersome and redundant, but the metrics also did not stack up well against industry benchmarks.

The learning design and development team also used similar Six Sigma tools to identify six metrics for focus. The first three metrics focused on the effectiveness of training development, assessing how often estimates met actual development time, breaking it out for new-hire training, ongoing development programs, and initiatives. The timeliness of development ranged from 20 percent to over 90 percent on time. The other three metrics were benchmark in nature, looking at the percentage of training that was vendor-developed, the percentage of learning delivered via each of the various modalities, and whether or not each learning team utilized any type of content management system. The team concluded that too many of the learning programs were designed in-house with little focus on content reuse, partnered with an overreliance on traditional classroom delivery. This increased costs, time, and production effort for learning programs.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders from seven lines of business, as well as human resources, finance, marketing, and other functions, were seen as key to winning acceptance and sponsorship of the teams' recommendations. These individuals were looking to the learning organization to help their teams become more productive, as well as to assist in the retention and ongoing development of their employees. They wanted to know what was available for them and their employees, to be able to quickly and easily locate what they needed to know when they needed to know it, and to trust that the learning tools and programs were of the highest quality. The stakeholders were people in key senior leadership roles who had the responsibility and personal influence within the line of business to provide support and resources needed to implement the team's recommendations. Simply put, gaining their approval and support was critical to ensuring the recommendations would go forward. Without it, the recommendations would go nowhere.

These individuals were identified at the beginning of the project during the pre-session work. Designated team members kept the stakeholders who were aligned with their teams apprised of the teams' actions throughout the entire process. The stakeholders provided advice and counsel to the teams and also served as a reality check for the preliminary recommendations. During the final thirty days leading up to Session 3: Present Final Recommendations, stakeholder briefings increased in frequency and in detail, essentially ensuring the stakeholders would not be surprised when they attended the final program session and were presented with the recommendations. On the evening before the final presentations, stakeholders joined the project teams for dinner, and the teams ensured the stakeholders were appropriately engaged and prepared for the following day. The significant investment in stakeholder engagement and management resulted in wide acceptance of the teams' recommendations and gave team members increased visibility to senior leaders within the organization.

### Project Recommendations

The goal of the teams was to provide high-quality learning that is fast, easy, and accessible. The teams made a number of project recommendations that would require long-term implementation plans:

- Invest in a *single learning management system (LMS)* with centralized administration. This allowed for a single system of record for all administration,

registration, tracking, and reporting, as well as standardized operating procedures. Users would find a more consistent experience and simplified navigation with a reduction in enrollment steps and cross-line-of-business inconsistencies. Economies of scale would be achieved regarding vendor pricing, service, and support. Standardized reporting with an emphasis on data integrity would reduce the number of errors, increasing credibility while also providing a more streamlined and consistent approach and decreasing cycle time for delivery.

- Invest in a *learning content management system* (LCMS) to maintain internally developed learning content to facilitate ease of access and content reuse.
- Drive change through a *learning standards committee* comprised of senior managers from each learning team who would validate, endorse, and drive adherence to a standard process methodology.
- Create a cross-functional *process and standards working group*, responsible for creating consistent and standardized tools, templates, and processes to drive an end-to-end, fully integrated learning experience for employees.
- Create a *sourcing working group* to develop guidelines for buy-versus-build decisions, with a goal of increasing the proportion spent on external vendors over time to more quickly and effectively meet learning needs across the businesses. Partner with supply chain management to obtain optimal pricing, products, and services with vendors.

The team believed that implementing these changes would accomplish the CTQ objectives of speed, accuracy, ease, and consistency. They would also meet the business challenge to optimize the investment in and management of processes, tools, programs, and technology relating to the design, development, and administration of learning for the individual lines of business as well as the enterprise. Implementation plans were put in place for each of these recommendations and transferred to business-as-usual responsibility with individuals within the learning organization. The action learning teams were disbanded after the recommendations were presented and accepted.

## KEY LEARNINGS

### From Six Sigma/DMAIC Process

The Six Sigma/DMAIC process provided a clear, data-driven structure to ensure that the right levels of facts, rigor, and discipline were put in place around the

process. Often teams can jump from problem identification to solution generation too quickly, missing out on understanding the true drivers of effectiveness and efficiency, and implementing a solution that has surface validity but does not address what is truly most critical and the root causes of the issues. The most challenging piece to follow through on is the control plan. The culture at Bank of America placed a high focus on execution, but not always as much rigor on revisiting solutions to see whether what was planned actually occurred in the way intended and yielded the intended outcomes. The deliberate focus on control plans was key to continued success.

### **From Action Learning Process**

The action learning process provided a framework for high-potential learning leaders to address two significant business issues that were of strategic importance to the company. Instead of being just a task force or special project, the program was undertaken with both project and learning objectives; as a result of using the action learning approach, several key learning points were identified:

- Talented, high-potential people are known to seek new, difficult challenges and to learn rapidly from experience. We found—as expected—that team members became very focused on the issue very quickly, as they wanted to solve the real, meaty, important business problem for the company. However, it was less natural for them to reflect on their individual or team learning objectives or to explicitly focus on deriving “lessons learned” from their experience. We observed first-hand the importance of building the discipline of reflection into the program, facilitated by team coaches, in order to achieve the program’s dual objectives and to ensure team members experienced the value of self-reflection and individual learning from their workday experience.
- In this situation, action learning worked very well as a live “testing ground” to see who emerged as a leader for the future. Certain individuals stepped up to the challenges to lead and influence others, while others stayed in the background.
- The action learning team format enabled leaders to establish effective, mutually respectful working relationships with teammates across the organization to facilitate the integration and partnership necessary for the changes ahead. In addition, it helped key talent form relationships with stakeholders that extended long after the project ended.

- Team members experienced increased competence and confidence in their teammates with regard to how to get things done at Bank of America, for example, stakeholder management, and how to influence at the executive level.
- Participants learned the value of the Six Sigma methodology and believed they were more prepared to apply these same skills to future business problems.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of changes in the global economy that have resulted in challenges to the financial services industry, Bank of America is reshaping itself to meet new economic realities. Much has changed since the Crack the Code recommendations were presented, yet the core themes behind those recommendations—maximizing the investment in and management of the company’s learning program—have never been more important. Ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning organization has moved from a one-time event into an ongoing effort. Implementation of the teams’ recommendations has continued with appropriate adjustments, given the environment. The need to develop a cadre of leaders for the future will continue to be an equally significant business challenge for the foreseeable future. This exercise proved that action learning programs can be an effective tool to both solve real business problems as well as develop key talent for the future.