

Briefing Note – Berkeley Executive Leadership Program

Course Details

Conference Topic/Title	Berkeley Executive Leadership Course
Attendee	Chief Executive Officer, Stevan Rodic
Event Organiser	BerkeleyExecEd
Dates	10-14 March 2025
Location	Haas School of Business, San Francisco, United States of America

Overview

The Berkeley Executive Leadership Program is the flagship executive training program at Haas School of Business in San Francisco, California.

Tailored for business leaders and executives ready to expand their capabilities to address their unique leadership challenges, the course is design to drive growth in every corner of the organisation.

This distinctive, globally-recognised executive training curriculum covers an unparalleled depth of topics such as personal leadership styles and strengths, advanced communication and decision-making, high-performance teams and culture, and disruptive innovation practices.

Participants are taught the complete toolset of the most modern and practical leadership tools, skills, and frameworks to enable skilfully lead innovation and growth but also to expand leadership potential and begin to reimagine what's possible.

Benefit to the City

This program aimed to enhance my leadership skills, focusing on driving change, innovation, and building a high-performance culture within the City of Stirling. My goal was to make the week personally and professionally transformative, in line with The Berkeley Leader ethos.

The Berkeley Leader

Question the Status Quo	We champion bold ideas, take intelligent risks and accept sensible failures, speaking our minds even when it challenges convention.
Confidence Without Attitude:	We make decisions based on evidence and analysis, giving us the confidence to act without arrogance and lead through trust and collaboration.
Student Always:	We are a community designed for curiosity and lifelong pursuit of personal and intellectual growth.
Beyond Yourself:	We lead ethically and responsibly, take the longer view in our decisions and actions and often put larger interests above our own.

The following report outlines the key learnings and insights gained from the program.

1. Recognising Essential Attributes of a Successful Leader

Participants developed a deeper understanding of the essential characteristics necessary for successful leadership. These included emotional intelligence, social intelligence, trust, and tri-sector leadership. The program emphasised the importance of these attributes in fostering effective leadership and building strong, cohesive teams.

Leaders excel by coping with change by focusing on setting direction, aligning/empowering people and motivating/inspiring/persuading them. This differs from a manager who copes with complexity by focusing on operational excellence.

2. Leading Change and Driving Innovation

The program provided strategies to surpass operational barriers and respond quickly to market demands. I have a better understanding of how to unlock innovation and fortify my leadership role. This involved understanding the dynamics of change management and implementing innovative solutions to drive organisational growth.

Applying the 'smallify' approach, I have the tools to move from 'Doer' to 'Leader' in this space. It's about giving yourself permission to do small things to in turn service big things and ultimately improve my performance. It's about thinking big and making sure the little things you do go towards your big idea. "Think big – bet small." If your small bet feels too big, just make it smaller so you can't not do it.

3. Increasing Influence and Persuasion

A significant focus was placed on enhancing influence and persuasion skills. I learnt how to clearly express my vision, communicate it effectively throughout the organisation, and stay on point during business challenges. Building trust and finding common ground at every level were key components of this learning.

It was interesting that the lecture talked of persuasion as a great asset to have in your repertoire. My initial thought was that persuasion was a negative attribute, but this element of the program put such an interesting slant on this mindset and has made me think about how I can positively influence others.

4. Creating and Nurturing a High-Performance Culture

The program highlighted the importance of building cross-functional and diverse teams. I was taught to prioritise mindfulness in leadership to attract and retain ambitious employees. This included strategies for developing a high-performance culture that encourages collaboration and excellence.

5. Developing a Competitive Leadership Advantage

We explored the concept of tri-sector leadership, which involves integrating business, government, and social sectors to address complex challenges. This approach provided a competitive edge in solving most pressing issues and driving sustainable success. 90 per cent of the difference between star performers and average performers at the senior executive level was attributed to their emotional intelligence.

6. Enhancing Leadership Skills and Personal Aspirations

The program began with an Emotional and Social Competency Inventory – a 360 degree assessment of my leadership skills and personal aspirations.

To gain an insight into perceptions of my management, a survey was distributed to 14 employees representing a broad cross section of the organisation.

This self-reflection helped me to identify my strengths and areas for improvement, setting the stage for a transformative learning experience. Overall, I was very pleased with the feedback.

In terms of my strengths, my colleagues rated the following five areas as my top performing:

1. Social Awareness – Organisational Awareness
2. Self Management – Achievement Orientation
3. Relationship Management – Inspirational Leadership
4. Self Management – Positive Outlook
5. Relationship Management – Teamwork

It was evident through my results that my colleagues believe I strive to improve my own performance and consistently seek out ways to do things better. My positive outlook in terms of seeing possibilities where some could see problems, and my hopes for the future of the organisation were also messages strongly conveyed to my colleagues.

While my results were very positive overall, my colleagues saw opportunities for further development in:

1. Cognitive Pattern Recognition

This relates to recognising patterns or trends in random information, events or situations. It is the ability to describe these patterns or trends to others, and to use metaphors or analogies to bring them to life and make them easily understood and recognisable. It is also the ability to see the similarities in very different situations.

2. Cognitive Systems Thinking

This is the ability to identify the various factors that impact upon a complex situation or event. It is recognising both the causes and effects of actions and outcomes. Systems Thinking is about explaining these interactions in terms others can understand, which may involve the use of diagrams, flow charts, detailed but simple discourse, etc.

7. Becoming a Force Multiplier

The concept of becoming a force multiplier was a key theme. Participants were taught how to use storytelling as a powerful communication tool, enhance their influence and persuasion, and drive high performance within their teams.

I was able to put some of my learnings in 'storytelling' to the test by presenting in front of the whole cohort on two occasions. Although initially apprehensive, I was soon being recognised as a personable and unique storyteller.

8. Strategic Communications and Action Planning

The program concluded with sessions on strategic communications and action planning. I learned to develop more effective communication strategies, manage conflicts, and build resilience. These skills were essential for implementing the leadership tools and insights gained during the program.

Conclusion

The Berkeley Executive Leadership Program provided me with valuable insights and practical tools to enhance my leadership capabilities. By focusing on essential leadership attributes, driving innovation, increasing influence, and nurturing a high-performance culture, I am better equipped to lead the City of Stirling towards achieving its strategic objectives and delivering exceptional outcomes for the community.

Throughout the course, we reflected on the idea of owning a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset. This was explored through presentations around the ability to 'smallify' problems- namely breaking down problems, setting achievable actions and doing them/celebrating them/learning from them. I can see from my strengths listed above that I am already achieving this in some areas. But where the value of the course can really be gained, is in how I 'smallify' the key areas for improvement from this feedback.

I welcomed the opportunity to meet other leaders from various organisations and countries across the world. I have made a number of connections and have already taken advantage of the relationships with some of the projects and programs I am currently developing at Stirling.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend a world class Executive Leadership Program, and am looking forward to putting all I have learned into play.

Stevan Rodic

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER