

## Q: Why has leadership development been ranked the most pressing issue within organizations today?

The success of any organization depends on high-performing teams with strong leadership. Indeed, leadership – at every level within the organization – is the conduit to competitive advantage and enterprise efficiency. With the increasing pressure of market and product competition, speed of technology, complexity of business operations, diversity of organizational demographics, and supply-chain expansion, leadership has never been more important than right now. Recent research with over 3,000 enterprise leaders has confirmed that nearly every executive has a myriad of mid- to entry-level managers in their organization and that everyone is struggling with finding a world-class, cost-effective and impact-oriented leadership development solution for their business’s frontline leaders.

## Q: Why focus professional development specifically on the frontline leader?

The frontline are the most important resource in any organization. The frontline leader (the first or second level manager) is directly responsible for product development, production of goods and services delivery, and supervision of teams focused on increasing business value. Research published in the Harvard Business Review notes that these frontline leaders make up about 60% of management ranks in organizations and oversee as much as 80% of organizational resources. A former McKesson executive said: “Frontline managers are the most critical manager in the organization and too often the least trained and prepared to effectively lead. For any organization to be effective, the leadership skills gap at the front line must be closed.”

## Q: What are the key principles (or requirements) for an effective frontline leadership development program?

In short, it’s access, relevance and efficiency. The best programs are intentionally designed with collaboration in mind; they are partnership with executives from leading companies, subject matter experts, futurists, and faculty from the most prestigious universities. Importantly, they give participants insights, wisdom, and empowerment from industry leading executives, coaches, and faculty. Additionally, content is aimed at developing frontline and mid-level leaders through structured combination of practice-based theories and immediate application. Lastly, it’s non-disruptive to busy schedules by leveraging a proven, efficient, online learning management system that delivers rich content and results with minimal job disruption.

## Q: What are the most significant skill gaps among frontline leaders?

Research has indicated that several organizations do a good job with onboarding frontline leaders when it comes to their specific organizational culture, but fall short when it comes to the following:

- Leading and Making Decisions: starting with a perpetual positive leadership mindset, facilitate, influence, and negotiate with individuals, teams, and groups toward decisions.

- Planning and Managing Change: leverage the power of systems thinking to mitigate risks and empower people during times of organizational transformation.
- Building Strong Relationships: establish alignment of individual purpose with team meaning and company mission to energize efforts and maximize results.
- Presenting Data Effectively: manage messaging based on stakeholder need and simplify complexity to create clarity in meaning, confidence in ability, and community among teams.
- Executing for Business Value: focus on projects and processes (and the people associated with them) while linking execution to strategy to deliver increasingly consistent business value.

## Q: What is the Professional Development Academy?

The Professional Development Academy makes leaders better, period. We challenge the status quo of traditional learning and leadership development by the intentional design of our collaborative learning model and we inspire action from our expertly facilitated leadership learning journey. We make existing leaders better and emerging leaders ready. In turn, teams become more dynamic, companies become a greater value to those in the communities in which they serve, and those individuals leading the way, well, they realize their fullest leadership potential as people. We offer a number of programs including:

- High Performance Leadership: A 12-week mentorship based program with content provided by industry leading executives. This program provides best practices in leadership, organizational development and change management, negotiation and collaboration, effective business communication, and delivering value within high performance management.
- Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership: A 12-week mentorship based collaborative readiness program led by Fortune 500 CISOs and peers who deliver their proven frameworks and insights on how to lead and secure a network and an organization – protecting data assets and the enterprise brand. This program coaches participants on what it means to think and act as a cybersecurity leader.
- Frontline IT Leadership: A 12-week mentorship based program led by CIOs, CISOs, and other executives and thought leaders that addresses the most pressing issue of our day, leadership development among IT professionals. The Frontline IT Leadership program offers an unparalleled leadership learning journey to enhance existing capabilities, skills, and confidence of first- and mid-level IT managers.
- Advancing Leadership in Government: To advance leadership succession and readiness in government, the National Association of Counties has collaborated with the Professional Development Academy. Together we offer a High Performance Leadership program, an Enterprise Cybersecurity program, and others. All programs are available to NACo member employees at substantially discounted rates. Each leadership program provides expert content from industry leading executives, professional coaches, and world-renowned academic faculty.

## Q: Who Should Attend the Professional Development Academy?

Frontline leaders interested in improving their capabilities, team engagement, and business outcomes. In some instances, Academy programs can be of great help to high performing individual contributors who are on track to be responsible for a team in the near future.

## Q: Who facilitates the Professional Development Academy programs?

All programs are expertly facilitated by subject matter experts. These facilitators have PhDs and years of experience as leaders.

## Q: How does a frontline leader enroll in a program?

Actually, the frontline leader does not enroll. Enrollment is provided by the frontline leader's supervising manager. In essence, the supervising manager sponsors their frontline leader's participation in the program. This has been proven to increase engagement and to align work from the Academy program to organizational initiatives. Additionally, for transparency the participating leader and the supervising manager receive periodic dashboard reports that outline topics covered, engagement statistics in the program, and completion rates of program activities.

## Q: Where does the Professional Development Academy training take place and for how long?

The Academy has a proprietary learning management system that enables all programs to be fully online. Most programs contain 12-weeks of content and to fully engage in that content takes about 4 hours per week. This has been determined manageable and non-disruptive to the already busy schedules of frontline leaders.

## Q: How are the online programs structured?

Intentionally designing asynchronous and synchronous activities with rich content and application-focused outcomes, the programs are structured as a whole-solution to competency needs of leaders rather than siloed activities, which often lack relevance and value. Here is a list of program activities:

- Breakout Group Meeting – 60-minute meeting (in-person or virtual) amongst breakout group members (typically 10-12 participants).
- Breakout Group Summary – These posts are for the rest of the cohort to see what your breakout group discussed. Each week your breakout group's designated leader or scribe will write this post which will be seen by the entire cohort.
- Discuss with Breakout Group – Share your thoughts, perspectives and comments with your breakout group. These will be seen by you, your breakout group, and faculty.
- Discuss with Cohort – Share your thoughts, perspectives and comments with your cohort. This is an online threaded discussion and you are expected to engage in with your colleagues. Posts will be seen by all participants and faculty.
- Live Event – 60-minute, virtual meeting conducted via web conference with your entire cohort and facilitated by your faculty mentor.
- Read – Read a document, case study or article.

- Reflect – Your online reflections are your private notes and thoughts. They will only be seen by you.
- Surveys or assessments – You will also receive occasional surveys on the platform for you to answer questions and submit responses that will help you shape your own learning journey and provide us valuable feedback to shape future courses.
- Watch – View a brief video from your faculty presenters.

## Q: What is a “breakout” group and why are they important to have in the leadership development program?

Breakout groups are key to the social learning aspect of any leadership development program and they are one of the highest rated activities of the Professional Development Academy in terms of value. Breakout groups are 8-12 participants who meet weekly to keep each other accountable to the program outcomes and each person’s individual development plans as well as validate and support each other’s ideas.

## Q: What makes this leadership training different?

The Professional Development Academy creates the fastest return on investment as compared to any leadership program. One executive expressed: “There is nothing on the market like this” and another said “The results from this program are unprecedented.”

There are clear distinctives for the organization as well as the participants. For the organization it is about expertise, affordability, and effectiveness; and for the frontline leader it is about relevance, convenience, and having an integrated whole-solution to their development.

- **EXPERTISE:** The faculty is a combination of CXOs and former CXOs, professors from renowned business schools and leadership icons.
- **AFFORDABLE:** The academy is significantly less expensive than an MBA degree – allowing leaders throughout the organization access to world-class development.
- **EFFECTIVE:** Participants and their supervising managers have provided glowing reviews of the program and how it’s changing their organizations.
- **RELEVANT:** It’s designed by C-suite leaders, so you can learn exactly what you need to succeed. And you’ll learn alongside a community of peers.
- **CONVENIENT:** The online social learning is flexible to allow for demanding schedules, yet structured to encourage continual progress.
- **INTEGRATED:** It’s designed for busy professionals, because you shouldn’t have to sacrifice your job responsibilities to improve your leadership capabilities.

## Q: Can participants earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for their completion of the program?

Yes. Many participants in the programs are certified in their field of practice. CEUs for existing certifications can be obtained when their association recognizes relevant educational activities or programs offered by the Professional Development Academy. With each 12-week program requiring about 4-hours per week of engagement, participants can earn up to 48-hours of CEUs.



**15) How does High Performance Leadership, Frontline IT and Enterprise Cybersecurity differ?**

	<b>High-Performance Leadership</b>	<b>Enterprise Cybersecurity</b>
<b>Content</b>	Content developed by and featuring leading CHROs, CFOs, CIOs and leaders focused on the whole enterprise	Content developed by and featuring leading CISOs and leaders focused on security and protecting the enterprise to enable growth. Specific content around intelligence gathering, security and innovation, and network of things
<b>Learning groups</b>	Small breakout groups of cross-functional peers Frontline and mid-level leadership roles across the enterprise and high-potential individual contributors	Security specific Information, cyber, risk management leaders and others involved in supporting enterprise security
<b>Executive guests</b>	Access to periodic executive insights on leadership webinars	Weekly executive guests and access to periodic executive insights on leadership webinars
<b>Simulations</b>	Mock negotiation	Cyberattack facilitated by veteran CISO with a mock negotiation
<b>Duration</b>	12 weeks	12 weeks