



# Why Small Group Coaching Works For Frontline Leaders

Why it is so impactful  
for organisations,  
participants and  
coaches

# Participants, clients & coaches share their stories of impact...

More than 600 frontline leaders have told us that their most productive development programs are very different from what many organisations offer.

Participants and clients have found high value and high impact from training that is:



Our version of small group coaching is called FASTLEAD. We have worked with more than 40 organisations in Australia and New Zealand to deliver hundreds of FASTLEAD coaching pods. If super effective learning and sustained behaviour change is important to your organisation, then we have some good news for you.

In this booklet we share some of these experiences, from FASTLEAD clients, participants and coaches. Their stories show what works so well about the core small group coaching approach, and how it can lead to very impressive results:

- 95% increase in confidence as a leader
- 94% improvement in leadership skills
- 78% increase in team relationships
- 64% improvement in the relationship with their manager.

(from our most recent survey of 100 frontline leaders completing FASTLEAD)

We believe this will challenge your current approach – in a good way. It will give your frontline leaders the learning that works best for them.

# Flexible, local, on topic and personal. How Fastlead met all our requirements

## DuluxGroup

**What is your role at DuluxGroup and what does the company do?**

I am the Learning and Development Manager at DuluxGroup. I look after leadership development, including our graduate program and other levels of leadership development, professional skills learning and our talent acceleration program.

DuluxGroup manufactures and markets premium home improvement products such as paints (Dulux, British Paints, Porter's, Berger) and coatings (Cabot's, Protective Coatings), consumer and industrial adhesives (Selleys, Parchem), garden care products (Yates), garage doors and openers (B&D group) and cabinet hardware (Lincoln Sentry). DuluxGroup is an ASX 100 listed company with over 4,000 employees across seven countries.

At DuluxGroup we are committed to developing our people through high quality leadership programs that are practical, thought provoking and high impact.

**When you embarked on the search for a frontline leader solution, what were you looking for?**

We had a tight brief from the Executive General Manager for Supply Chain. Our frontline leaders head teams across the business every day and are critical to our success, especially in delivering products and services in full and on time for our customers.

Our employees in these roles such as team leaders, supervisors, or store managers can't be taken off the floor for long periods of time, so full day programs were



**Sally Sharman**  
Learning and  
Development Manager  
DuluxGroup

not going to be suitable. We also know that many people don't learn well in a workshop environment. We wanted the total time for the program to be around two days. We also knew that breaking up the learning would get a better outcome.

Our participants are geographically spread, in major cities in Australia and New Zealand. That meant we had to partner with a learning provider who could service that spread. Given the nature of the group as well, we wanted a face to face solution. Many of our participants have had no formal leadership training, and they don't work on a computer all day – they work in warehouses, factories or stores.

**“At DuluxGroup we are committed to developing our people through high quality leadership programs that are practical, thought provoking and high impact”**

**How did the FASTLEAD program fit your development and business criteria?**

We were immediately attracted to the small coaching pod model. The timeframe – two hours, once a month, with a single topic – seemed to be the right fit for our people. We reviewed the core models carefully to ensure consistency, and were very comfortable with the content. All of our learning offerings have to be highly practical, with a real focus on application. FASTLEAD delivers that.

**What results have you found from implementing FASTLEAD?**

Participants say they have really benefited from the topics covered by the coaching, and that they really enjoyed working with other people in DuluxGroup. In the pilot, most of our groups were made up of participants from different parts of the business. This allowed them to not only speak freely about what was going on for them in their workplace, but to get to know people they wouldn't ordinarily meet.

Relationships between managers and their participants have also been improved through the program, because the manager takes on the role of coach back on the job. With the set-up of the FASTLEAD program, the managers also learn new skills and knowledge as they experience the program through their participants. That is a real extra benefit.

The success of the pilot program led us to implement 14 more FASTLEAD pods this year.

**Would you recommend FASTLEAD to others in your role? What tips would you give them for successful implementation?**

I would certainly recommend FASTLEAD for frontline leaders. The model is very suited to the audience, and HFL delivers it well.

The administration is all done by HFL, and the materials are very good quality. The coaches are responsive, and can speak with people at all levels. The account management team is customer-centred, always ensuring the program is hitting the mark. They have also shown themselves to be very flexible. We had a topic we wanted included and they wrote the module especially for us.

In terms of implementation, I would strongly recommend mixed groups – people from different sites and roles in each pod. You definitely get the extra benefit. Following our pilot, we spent time reviewing the communication and onboarding of our people into the program and made improvements. Logistics are a challenge with mixed group, but it is really worth the effort.

My other suggestion is to spend time with the managers of the participants, and ensure they are really engaged and clear on their role in the program. Our most successful participants were those whose managers took the time to follow up and gave their participants the scope to try on new behaviours back on the job.



# Cost effective and personally customisable - Why Genea chose Fastlead

## Genea

### What is Genea's business?

Genea has forged a reputation as a pioneer of fertility treatment, insightful research and world leading science. We implemented FASTLEAD to support current and emerging frontline leaders in gaining the self-insight and skills required to lead effectively, and to encourage cross-collaboration across the business.

### When did you implement the program

We started FASTLEAD with seven pods in February 2017, and four more in September 2017. All participants did Leading vs Managing and Time Management as foundational topics, then they could select four more topics from the 14 that were available. Following the six month program, pod participants were mixed again and did the remaining FASTLEAD topics informally.

### When looking for a frontline leader development program, what were your criteria?

We were looking for a number of criteria:

- Relevant and current content that matches the challenges of frontline leaders today and over the next two to three years.
- A cost-effective solution, because we wanted to implement it for a lot of our frontline managers. It was a big investment for a mid-sized organisation such as Genea.



**Andy Brown**  
HR Director  
Genea

- Content that was flexible enough to meet the differing levels of experience and competence of the group.
- A supplier that was flexible in terms of what the final solution would look like.

### How did the FASTLEAD program fit your development and business criteria?

The pod concept ensured great flexibility and enabled us to tailor the module priorities in terms of the groups and sequencing. It allowed us to easily meet specific individual and organisational capability requirements.

### What results have you found since implementing FASTLEAD?

Our leaders reported improved leadership skills, greater confidence in their leadership ability, and an improved relationship with their team. Most of them also said the program improved their relationship with their manager and made them more likely to stay with the organisation.

“Most participants said the program had improved their relationship with their manager”

The personalised nature of the sessions, as well as the models shared, helped our leaders explore different ways of dealing with various situations. Time management, delegation and conflict management were particularly impactful, with participants reporting improved personal organisation, a more nuanced approach to delegation, and a more confident approach to conversations with their team.

### If you were talking to someone in a role like yours, would you recommend FASTLEAD? What tips would you give them for successful implementation?

I would definitely recommend FASTLEAD. My advice to any organisation implementing it would be to ensure a high degree of internal ownership and coordination. This helps maximise the pod concept in terms of participant mix and modules, and brings the broader groups together also for key learnings across the whole organisation.

# What are Fastlead participants saying?

## A senior embryologist empowers his team

**What were some of your leadership challenges prior to FASTLEAD, and what did you want to get out of the program?**

It was a difficult time for me in the lab. I was receiving some criticism that was difficult to hear, about my ability to make good connections with colleagues on the same level as me. I was managing well up and down the line, but I wasn't managing well across my peers. Improving those skills was a key thing I wanted to get from the program.

**What was your experience of the program?**

It was very valuable being paired with very different departments, such as Biomedx, Biochemistry, Embryology and Ultrasound. That helped me see that the leadership challenges in different departments were actually quite similar.

When you have leaders from different departments coming into the same room to share experiences rather than discuss business issues it helps break down the silos.

**How does FASTLEAD differ from previous development programs you've been on?**

The structure was a key difference – the fact it was over a sustained period of time versus a typical two to three day course, which is pretty intensive but easy to forget. Exposure over time makes it easier to change and build habits that are going to stick, rather than getting an

**Daniel Morgan**

Senior Embryologist  
Genea



intensive bunch of information without time to practically implement it and get feedback on it.

A lot of the concepts on the program weren't new, but the practical application of them made a difference. So did having the time to discuss particular scenarios, which makes the program customised and personalised. The practical adaptation of concepts was very valuable.

**What has changed as a result of FASTLEAD? What skills have you applied and what's been the impact?**

One of those most significant things was coming up with a personal mission statement. That has stuck with me and has changed my way of thinking about my leadership style.

A key part was learning to be a magnanimous leader who empowers my team to realise their potential. It has enabled me to do this without holding a specific title or a position of team leader. Doing it without a formal position of leadership can sometimes be more effective, because people don't think I'm telling them something that might affect their salary or performance review.

I've also strengthened my connection with my peers. Many things have contributed to this. The most important was being consistent and being myself, rather than trying to be different things to different people. I found I became a go-to person for troubleshooting and patient related challenges. Instead of simply trying to help people, I was able to pass my skills on. It was very much a two way conversation.

**What advice would you give to anybody doing the FASTLEAD program?**

Commit to the time. Block it out every month. If you plan it all well in advance there's no excuses. Protect that time – both you and the business will get value from the investment.

Look for ways you can actively implement the things you've learnt. The program runs over six months, so if you implement a change that doesn't work, you have time to go back to the group, discuss it, get a different perspective, and try a different approach.

**“One of the most important things was coming up with a personal mission statement”**

## Increased delegation and flexing of style achieved from face to face coaching

**What were some of your leadership challenges prior to FASTLEAD?**

I was having difficulty delegating and with time management, especially managing interruptions. I was also avoiding conflict with staff and not challenging non performers.

**What was your experience of the program?**

The coaching sessions were hugely beneficial. Face-to-face contact with a coach and other members of staff was invaluable. This cannot be replaced with online modules. The networking aspect with other team members across the company was also great in broadening my understanding of different departments and their challenges.

**How does FASTLEAD differ from previous development programs you've been on?**

It was face-to-face, not online, with strict meeting times. This was



**Amy Scott**

Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Genea

very important. Having a structure where you've locked in two hours each month, rather than being left to your own devices, creates an experience that helps you remember what you have learnt.

**What has changed as a result of FASTLEAD? What skills have you applied and what's been the impact?**

FASTLEAD really helped my ability to see the big picture, and to adapt my style depending on which nurse I am managing. It has greatly helped my ability to delegate, helping me understand I cannot do everything myself, and nor should I. It's not the best use of my time. I can now delegate without feeling guilty, and do so effectively.

**What advice would you give to anybody doing the FASTLEAD program**

Stick to the meeting time and make sure you attend. Face-to-face is so important.



# What are Fastlead participants saying?

## Using emotional intelligence for positive reinforcement

### What were some of your leadership challenges prior to FASTLEAD?

I felt I needed to learn how to become aware of the signs when team members aren't coping, to help them and to help me get the best from them. Dealing with people who are highly strung and very emotional can be very challenging.

### What was your experience of the program?

The way the pod was set up worked really well. We had people from three different business units, rather than three people from one business area. That was a great advantage.

Our sessions were set up as a general discussion, with each session starting with a debrief of the previous session. We asked each other specific questions about how we had used the previous session's skill sets during the month.

As a group we would give feedback and positive reinforcement to the person sharing their stories. We would then discuss the next topic and see how these coincided with our current work leadership issues and tasks. More often than not this would result in the three of us sharing our stories of circumstances where the skills we were discussing would have a practical application in our work.

The whole group would then discuss the circumstance, and try and work out a solution. We challenged each other to use the skills being learnt to help each of us solve the issue at hand. Also, our coach was very knowledgeable and had a great deal of experience.



**Nathan Allan**  
NZ Liaison: B&D  
Doors and Openers  
DuluxGroup

### How does FASTLEAD differ from previous development programs you've been on?

It was real adult learning and conversations – not death by text book. It allowed us all to speak freely and without judgement. It also allowed for non-biased reasoning within the group and really helped create friendships that will continue into the future.

We were also able to use each other as sounding boards between the sessions. We would sometimes email and call on each other to help see issues from an outsider's perspective, and give feedback and offer solutions to keep us on track. After each session I would check in with my manager and give him an overview of what we covered. This is quite different to other programs.

### What has changed as a result of FASTLEAD? What skills have you applied and what's been the impact?

I try to use all of the material and ideas. I'm a lot more aware of my team members' emotions and the way I manage them. I make better choices. It's all about emotional intelligence. It's given me a lot more confidence to trust my own judgement.

### What advice would you give to anybody doing the FASTLEAD program

Open up. Share your experiences. We were all able to challenge each other. It was great to get each other's take on our own situations. Because we had three different business units we were able to look at issues objectively, because we weren't already emotionally involved.

Don't be scared to discuss current challenges!

**“Fastlead was real adult learning - not death by text book”**

## The advantages of feedback from different business units



**Cameron Murcutt**  
Trade Centre  
Manager  
DuluxGroup

### How does FASTLEAD differ from previous development programs you've been on?

The timeline of the program works in its favour. With each session covering a specific topic, the month in between allows you to put learnings into place and explore the ideas you're exposed to in the course. Allowing for feedback on the previous month at the beginning of each session let the pod see practical responses to the topics from the people who implemented them – what worked, what didn't, and how to improve.

The mixed pod I was a part of included an export manager from the B&D business unit and a Warehouse Supervisor from our Lincoln Sentry business unit. The blending of people from different parts of the business worked perfectly. None of us knew each other or the stakeholders in our professional lives, so we felt we could speak openly and candidly about our concerns and issues.

### What advice would you give to anybody doing the FASTLEAD program

At times conversation could veer off topic but our HFL learning coach kept us focused and on track. It also meant that we saw a wider range of managerial and interpersonal challenges.

A key example was the experiences of the other site managers responding to union pressures that aren't present in the trade store division. If this program is to succeed on a personal level, people must be allowed to speak openly about their careers, and the blend of business units. Fastlead facilitates that perfectly.

# Fastlead coach insights

## Tackling meaty issues and drilling down is the reward from coaching

**In your experience what is different about coaching a FASTLEAD pod compared to other frontline leader programs?**

The clearest benefit comes from the group discussions. Over the duration of FASTLEAD, the people in the pod leverage their experiences, plus they add people with whom they have built trust to their professional network.

**What do you find rewarding about working with FASTLEAD participants and their managers?**

We were able to build really solid connections. The rapport that FASTLEAD enables meant we could tackle meaty issues and really drill down into what practical skills would most help the participants and the business.

**What do you find most challenging about coaching FASTLEAD?**

There is a lot of content and the pace is very quick. FASTLEAD is fast! From the moment a session commences, we get stuck right in and really dig into a topic, constantly referring back to the lived reality of the participants. FASTLEAD has a highly practical focus.

FASTLEAD is also a superbly resourced program, with each of the 14 modules heavily supported with extensive material on the online resources centre. As a FASTLEAD coach, I need to remain current which means staying across an ever increasing amount of resource material.



**“Fastlead is also a superbly resourced program, with each of the 14 modules supported with extensive online resources”**

**What tips would you give to organisations thinking about implementing FASTLEAD?**

It is important to effectively brief the managers of the FASTLEAD participants. The more the managers understand the program, the better outcomes for everyone; themselves and their departments, the FASTLEAD participants, and most definitely the organisation overall.





# Fastlead coach insights

## Working through live issues a true difference about small group coaching

**In your experience what is different about coaching a FASTLEAD pod compared to other frontline leader programs?**

A key factor is the intimacy of the group. They get the benefits of sharing knowledge and ideas, as they would in a workshop, while also having the chance to have individual attention and coaching.

From the coach's viewpoint there is an increased ability to adapt and focus on what is happening for the participants right now, working through live issues and applying content or frameworks. It's a great mix and balance between content and structure of a workshop and the focused attention and flexibility of coaching. There are many benefits in having several sessions – there is always follow up and accountability.

**“the participants are at a stage in their career where they are moving up, and these skills are very useful. They want tools, support and encouragement, to be given permission to step up and be a leader”**



**Glen Hancox**  
Fastlead Coach

**What do you find rewarding about working with FASTLEAD participants and their managers?**

It's great to hear their stories and how they have applied what they have learnt at the start of each session. I love hearing what they tried and how it went in the real world. It's all about a direct application to the business.

I also get to see the growth of the people over time and their growing confidence as leaders. It's rewarding because the participants are at a stage in their career where they are moving up, and these skills are very useful. They want tools, support and encouragement, to be given permission to step up and be a leader. Manager support is key, and having that link back to the business.

I also enjoy collaborating with managers to support the FASTLEAD participants in their journey. It's hard to try out what you've learnt if your manager isn't on board. When the group bonds, especially when they are from different parts of the business, this flows into their working relationships. It is an added bonus and great to see.

**What do you find most challenging about coaching FASTLEAD?**

The biggest challenge is finding the balance between the structure and flow of the session and the content. You have to let go a bit and focus on what's happening in the business and in the room. You don't want it to become a venting session, or for one person to dominate the discussion because of what's happening for them specifically.

It's a challenge to make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute and be coached while maintaining the engagement of the other people in the group. I also want to ensure we cover the topic for the month. The challenge for me as a coach is for each person to leave every session feeling like they have tools and actions to put into practice as soon as they get back to work.

**What tips would you give to organisations thinking about implementing FASTLEAD?**

Do it well and do it properly, right from the outset. Think about why you are doing it and what the objectives and outcomes are. Consider carefully who to put on the program. It's not for problem people, it's for those who want to learn and grow as leaders, those who need practical support now that they find themselves in a leadership role.



# Implementing small group coaching successfully

Getting the coaching aspect of the small group pods right is crucial. But that alone is not enough to ensure frontline leaders can translate their learning experience to the application of new skills back on the job. A key aspect of FASTLEAD is its practical nature, providing a feedback mechanism between the program and actual management skills.

FASTLEAD was developed based on extensive research over three years on the development needs of frontline leaders. The 14 topic choices are based on the skills frontline leaders need to master, to create a productivity jump for both themselves as team leaders, and the performance of their teams.

We encourage the coaching pod participants to collaborate and choose their own topics. Coaching sessions are two hours onsite and typically delivered monthly, which means frontline leaders aren't away from their day jobs for long periods of time. They can absorb the topic of the day and what they have learnt between sessions and apply their new skills in practical situations on the job.

Here are all the elements that combine to achieve great results from small group coaching:

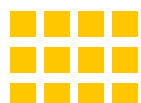
## What makes Fastlead unique: an overview



### Small Groups

FASTLEAD is executed in coaching "pods", which typically contain three participants and one FASTLEAD coach.

- ✓ Very personal
- ✓ Very applied learning
- ✓ Very experiential
- ✓ Direct experience of coaching skills



### Episodic

FASTLEAD is executed in two hour sessions, either every fortnight or every month.

- ✓ Limited time away from the workplace
- ✓ One topic per session
- ✓ Shared experiences
- ✓ Direct experience of coaching skills



### Broad Topics

There are 14 topics that have been researched from hundreds of frontline leaders.

- ✓ Participants choose their topics
- ✓ Pre and post work
- ✓ Learning portal to support additional learning



### Practice

FASTLEAD leaves role playing for dead. In our "real" plays, real challenges are discussed and practised.

- ✓ Real challenges explored by real plays
- ✓ Shared experiences and practice
- ✓ Sessions prepare participants for real conversations back in the workplace



### 24 x 7 and Social Learning

The FASTLEAD learning portal operates 24 x 7, allowing participants to learn on the go and in down time.

- ✓ Every topic has a resource centre
- ✓ Self paced learning modules
- ✓ Forums

## Interested in a deeper dive?

Download these free resources at [www.hflleadership.com.au/fastlead](http://www.hflleadership.com.au/fastlead):

- 8 principles of small group coaching
- First Time Leader: Insights From Several Research Studies
- Into The Challenges And Changed Learning Habits Of Frontline Leaders

## Next Steps



### Contact Us

Contact us at one of our offices on the next page to discuss further information and pricing.

### Promote

If you would like to promote the program within the business, we have the templates for you to use.

### Activate

With our help, group the participants into pods and get started! Our project team will do all the heavy lifting.

With delivery to over 600 participants across more than 220 pods HFL's Fastlead program can help to energise and engage your frontline leaders.

With over 40 clients in Australia and New Zealand Fastlead is a diverse program deliverable across a variety of company sizes and industries:



# HFL leadership At-A-Glance

## Vision and Mission

25 years young, HFL's vision is that every employee in every organisation has the right to be led by a capable leader. Our mission is to help the leaders of organisations we work with lead better.

## How we approach leadership development

We believe improving leadership capability in organisations is not rocket science. Assuming a disciplined approach, we co-create initiatives with clients to ensure:

- Every leadership development initiative is linked to strategy, and has clearly defined measurable outcomes;
- Programs build sustainable behaviour change, which requires participants to commit to self development;
- Leadership development should be a priority for every leader in the organisation, regardless of their seniority; and
- We become a trusted partner, by demonstrating that we look after your development dollars as if they were our own.

## Our services

We offer a broad range of customised services, which cover the whole lifecycle of leadership development:

**Leadership culture consulting** – auditing current and desired leadership cultures mapped to strategic ambitions;

**Leadership assessment and talent management** – auditing current bench strength, establishing benchmarks for recruitment and development;

**Leadership development** – designing and delivering programs from senior executives to frontline leaders and emerging talent at all levels;

**Executive coaching and post program support** – a thoroughly qualified panel of coaches throughout the Asia Pacific and Australasia, with multiple execution options available.

# HFL Innovation

## As the workforce changes, so must we

For 25 years HFL leadership has focused on customised programs, linked to the unique strategy and requirements of individual organisations. But as changes take place in our environment, we have developed three innovative programs that reflect common needs between our clients:

**FASTLEAD** is an innovative small-group coaching solution for frontline and emerging leaders; coaching combined with curriculum.

**MASTERING EXPERTSHIP** is a unique development program for technical experts to help them build business-focused knowledge practices and relationships – what we call Expertship.

**VIRTUAL-LEADER** is a leadership extension program designed for existing leaders who are tasked with leading virtual teams, based on extensive research about best practice virtual leadership.

## You have many choices, do we fit?

We know you have literally hundreds of choices when it comes to selecting a leadership development partner. Our approach is pretty simple:

- we would want to assist in ensuring senior executive ownership, not just sponsorship, of initiatives;
- we take an ultra-experiential approach to design, with a strong facilitation orientation rather than training; we value a blended approach to design, and are not overly academic or committed to particular content sets;
- we place the participant experience at the centre of everything we do;
- we believe co-creation is the secret to success.

We hope this sounds like a good fit.





# FASTLEAD is powered by HFL

## We Help Leaders Lead Better

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