3M

Global Leadership Behaviors: A Platform for Inclusion, Talent Development, and Cultural Transformation

Catalyst Perspective

In the report *Inclusive Leadership: The View from Six Countries*, Catalyst uncovers what makes employees feel included across cultures, and how individual Leadership Behaviors can promote inclusion across genders and likewise across regional contexts. Further, Catalyst’s report *High Potentials in Tech-Intensive Industries: The Gender Divide in Business Roles* brings to light a significant barrier to advancement, particularly for women, and calls companies to action to establish clearer paths to promotion and better-defined and articulated evaluation criteria. 3M’s approach to establishing behavioral expectations for organization-wide leadership is ahead of the curve and embodies these research findings. The company:

- Fosters a collective and individual ownership of a culture of inclusion.
- Promotes individual achievement and development alongside team and organizational success with clear, consistent standards,
- Drives a culture of leadership at all levels.

History and Launch of Activity, Program, or Policy

In 2012, Inge Thulin, 3M’s newly appointed CEO, was faced with a challenge. How do you take an already highly successful company and inspire and enable even higher levels of organizational performance in a highly competitive world market that is often uncertain and constantly shifting? The solutions needed to be comprehensive and transformative and yet work within 3M’s culture.

Thulin began with a systematic approach to creating higher levels of organizational performance. Moving step by step, Thulin built in time for all employees to fully understand and embrace each phase before moving on to the next. This ensured both that the process was manageable and that employees around the globe would feel a sense of ownership in its success. In February of 2012, during his first month as CEO, Thulin introduced a new vision for the corporation:

- 3M Technology Advancing Every Company
- 3M Products Enhancing Every Home;
- 3M Innovation Improving Every Life.
He subsequently launched six business strategies in July 2012 to support the vision. These company-wide business strategies represent 3M’s long-term approach for achieving the goals set forth by the vision statement. Among these six strategies is one focused on 3M’s people, specifically “Build high-performing and diverse global talent.”

With the key parts of 3M’s framework in place, Thulin’s focus quickly shifted to developing leaders and the organization for the future. While Thulin and his leadership team championed change, Thulin knew it was important that the new vision and strategies did not live and die with a single leader. The next step in his plan focused on defining what behaviors were needed from employees to embrace the new vision and strategies. This resulted in the development of a new set of 3M Leadership Behaviors that were completed at the end of 2013 and rolled out globally in 2014. The behaviors were designed to integrate with the new larger organizational vision while staying true to 3M’s strengths and deep history. Most importantly, the behaviors were designed around differentiators within 3M, rather than external standards or trends outside the company’s walls. Universal concepts such as ethics and innovation are woven into the behaviors, but in ways that are unique to 3M’s talent and culture.

With the Leadership Behaviors Thulin brought his agenda to life, defining success throughout all of 3M, and owning and executing the new vision and strategies across all levels.

**Strategy of Engagement**

Historically 3M had a set of “leadership attributes” that long served as a framework for communicating and measuring leadership expectations across the company. The move from attributes to behaviors was deliberate, signaling that “leadership” does not belong to a few elite people with “inherent traits,” but rather that all people can and should demonstrate leadership through their actions.

3M recognizes that leaders—at all levels—primarily influence others based on observable behaviors: leadership is not just about what you say, but about what you do. The Leadership Behaviors establish not only what is expected, but also how everyone can demonstrate and meet those expectations through their actions and interactions. In this way, the Leadership Behaviors provide a system for everyone to be successful.

There are six 3M Leadership Behaviors, each with a brief two-to-three sentence definition to provide further detail on what the behavior entails, as well as a more in-depth tool to help apply the behaviors to the performance-management process. The tool itself was designed to describe what the behaviors look like for three types of roles: individual contributors, leaders, and senior leaders.

The six 3M Leadership Behaviors are:

- Play to Win
- Innovate
- Foster Collaboration & Teamwork
- Prioritize & Execute
Develop Others & Self
Act with Integrity & Transparency

3M also created an accountability system to ensure that employees truly integrate the behaviors into their job functions and interactions with colleagues and their teams. This is primarily executed through a feedback scorecard in which employees are rated on a scale of one to five for each leadership behavior. Groups of managers then work together to come to a consensus on each employee’s rating. This collaborative process ensures fair ratings that take multiple perspectives into account, establishes a mechanism for direct supervisor/manager accountability, and ensures a system of checks and balances within the company’s leadership. Once managers decide on a score, the rating becomes part of the annual performance review process. This approach has tangible effects by providing incentives for employees to incorporate the behaviors into their roles at 3M, and inspiring managers to provide support from the top down.

In order to support the successful integration of the 3M Leadership Behaviors across the organization, several additional initiatives and programs have been established to help move the organization toward its vision. A few examples are:

- As part of the broader approach to organizational improvement, the company redesigned workspaces in multiple locations to allow for more “collaboration hubs”—work areas where employees can comfortably convene to discuss and collaborate. This change encourages a cooperative working style, and enables “foster collaboration and teamwork” behavior.
- 3M also reaches into the community, sponsoring The Young Scientist Challenge to draw young people to STEM careers. This initiative helps to build a stronger pipeline of future talent for the company, and also presents an opportunity for employees to display the “develop others and self” behavior.
- The new leadership mindset has been integrated into all leadership classes within 3M, as well as the process for creating individual development plans. This formal training and planning reinforces and sustains the understanding of the behaviors and ensures their uptake at all levels.
- 3M launched the “I’m In” campaign: a global engagement, diversity, and inclusion initiative. The campaign serves to build pride and comfort in bringing one’s whole, authentic self to 3M. The program specifically underscores the “foster collaboration and teamwork” behavior, as well as the “act with integrity and transparency” behavior, in its promotion of open and respectful approaches to diversity.

Success Factors
With a deep history, a broad global presence, and a diversified industry and talent profile, creating a shared vocabulary and globally understood and accepted standards is no easy feat. One of the most critical factors in the success of the Leadership Behaviors roll-out was organizational fit. Two processes were integral to success; calibration sessions to solicit feedback and ensure consistency, as well as regional application.
**Calibration sessions**
Calibration sessions were held among HR staff across geographies before 3M’s global roll-out of the Leadership Behaviors. The sessions were particularly helpful for getting early feedback and to ensure that the behaviors would be understood, enacted and evaluated consistently. Using anonymous employee examples to walk through the performance management process, the calibration sessions helped HR managers understand what constitutes appropriate ratings across the one-to-five scale in evaluating leadership behavior. In addition to these calibration sessions, 3M established a hotline to collect continued feedback.

**Regional Application**
3M recognizes that in a multifaceted, multimarket, multinational organization the leadership context varies greatly. Yet, the Leadership Behaviors also had to be relevant in all of 3M’s various industries and across the many countries in which the company operates. This meant that while the company’s leadership behaviors are non-negotiable, employees from all over the world were encouraged to apply their individual perspectives and experiences to the roll out of the Leadership Behaviors, to bring them to life in their own ways. Having a shared vocabulary to define the behaviors that are expected and valued at 3M ensures that all employees understand what it means to be a leader in the organization. From there, they can enact the behaviors in ways that ring true to their own work styles, personalities, cultural backgrounds, skills, and job roles.

The company’s emphasis on cultivating a shared understanding of leadership while enabling nuanced individual and local implementation has significantly contributed to the success of the 3M Leadership Behaviors. Demonstrating this commitment to global reach and regional applicability, 3M has encouraged its locations around the world to introduce the Leadership Behaviors in unique and culturally specific ways, while continually working to connect all employees around this new way of thinking. For example, the company created a Leadership Behavior video that included clips of the rollout at each of 3M’s country locations. Each 3M leadership team shared this video with their organization. Below are several examples of some aspects of local implementations carried out by various countries to introduce and imbed the new Leadership Behaviors.

**India**
- In 3M India, leaders picked prominent figures from Indian history and culture to illustrate the Leadership Behaviors and provide local, culturally-relevant role models who demonstrate what the behaviors look like in action.
- A philosophical discussion with employees enlarged upon the behaviors and how they pertained to both 3M and Indian culture.

**China**
- Members of the China Leadership Team created a video in which they discussed their own understanding of the Leadership Behaviors. The video was then broadcast on the 3M China TV channel and was viewed by over 4,000 employees.
- 3M China also showed the 3M Leadership Behaviors video at a town hall meeting in Shanghai, attended by over 1,000 employees.
• Two hundred and seventy senior managers came together for a Leading the Change Management Conference. The conference included a panel discussion session with seven China Leadership Team members, during which each shared their personal leadership stories and their understanding of the behaviors.

Czech Republic
• 3M Czech Republic created a Leadership Behaviors competition.
  o Employees chose the winners themselves, allowing participants to recognize co-workers who have effectively integrated the various behaviors into their work and interpersonal interactions.
  o This competition helped further define what the behaviors look like in practice by spotlighting role models.

Hong Kong
• In 3M Hong Kong, company leaders took a game approach. They distributed envelopes with skills inside and asked employees to match the skills with the relevant behaviors.
  o This exercise presented a creative approach to helping employees become familiar with the behaviors, while also showcasing how the behaviors could be put into action by leveraging existing skills.

Korea
• 3M Korea rejuvenated their Women’s Leadership Forum chapter, and leveraged the opportunity to integrate the Leadership Behaviors into their business practices.
  o One hundred and fifty women employees attended the forum’s launch event.
  o The launch included a panel discussion with business leaders in which each took a behavior and discussed what it meant in terms of women’s leadership.

Catalyst Change Drivers
Communication
Effective communication is one of the most important factors in 3M’s roll-out of the Leadership Behaviors. The company utilizes social media, mass communications, and participatory live events to share the program across geographies. Through these various forums, 3M has been able to spread its new philosophy within its locations and across the globe.

3M leaders created an image to serve as a visual depiction of the behaviors. In the image, a diverse group of people representing 3M’s diverse talent base hold up signs with each behavior written on them. This image has been distributed globally, displayed in many 3M offices, and a version has been placed on the back of every employee badge. During the roll-out, several locations chose to create and submit their own versions of the picture, showing themselves and their colleagues holding up the behavior signs. While such gestures may seem small, they illustrate the strong local and personal ownership of the behaviors and the new leadership mindset.

As part of the global rollout, Thulin created a video that introduced the new 3M Leadership Behaviors and challenged every country and division to put together a two-minute video of how they were integrating the Leadership Behaviors in
their own location. Each Leadership Team was also asked to host a fun event to present the behaviors, and the event often became the content for the videos that came back to corporate. All locations were required to submit their videos, and 3M headquarters then compiled clips into a short global video. This global version was then sent to all members of the organization and shown at various in-person events across the company’s operations. Practices such as these have raised awareness, connected 3M employees to one another and motivated them to demonstrate their commitment to the new behaviors.

One of the company’s most publicized events was the global 3M Leadership Behavior Social Media Day. The event was intended to both educate employees about the behaviors and highlight corporate diversity. At the on-site event at 3M’s headquarters in Saint Paul, Minnesota, all employees were given a diversity “passport,” which was stamped at every station that they visited. At the stations, employees learned about each leadership behavior and the ways they could use technology to further it. There were additional stations dedicated to different cultural groups within 3M. Employees were also encouraged to post comments on a LinkedIn discussion forum or tweet reactions to the day’s events and the Leadership Behaviors on Twitter. Events such as Leadership Behavior Social Media Day help to intensify employees’ identification with the initiative and made them aware of how they can leverage the behaviors to improve their own performance and success at 3M. And by targeting social media outlets, 3M has encouraged employees to publicly endorse the behaviors, increasing the company’s online presence not only as a corporate trailblazer, but as an organization comprising individual leaders.

**Senior-Level Leadership**

Thulin with his leadership team not only created the 3M Leadership Behaviors but drove their execution by being heavily involved in their rollout. This was evident from his inclusive leadership approach and collaborative efforts in developing and communicating the behaviors, to his visible championing of the behaviors to ensure they were imbedded in all people processes to actively manage alignment.

The behaviors also provide fertile ground for leadership discussions. All leaders across the organization have articulated their understanding about and views on the Leadership Behaviors, and shared personal experiences connected to each behavior. In this way, the behaviors serve as a unique storytelling platform, which leaders have embraced and championed across a number of virtual and in-person forums.

**The Impact of the Activity, Program, or Policy**

In its short history to date, the 3M Leadership Behaviors have been very well received and successfully integrated across the company. Anecdotal feedback from senior executives and pipeline employees alike suggest a highly positive response to the new behaviors. Experiences across the organization suggest that the new approach makes 3M’s talent management and leadership development processes more transparent, openly discussed, and part of the everyday culture. Specifically, hearing leaders talk about their own journeys and how the behaviors are relevant to their careers is extremely helpful. This also
enables crucial development and advancement conversations by providing leaders and employees a common frame of reference for discussion. In fact, HR leaders have noted that conversations involving deliberate and thoughtful career planning, particularly among young women, are more frequent and constructive since the introduction of the behaviors.

Next Steps
At year-end 2014 the 3M Leadership Behaviors are now being applied for the first time in the organization’s formal performance-management process. This will provide invaluable data and feedback for the program’s ongoing evaluation. The tools used to support the uptake of the Leadership Behaviors will also be revisited as part of this evaluation to ensure that all employees have the best resources to support their own growth and development.

As the CEO’s agenda continues to evolve and grow, future events will take place to maintain momentum around both the Leadership Behaviors and the larger strategy. Social media will continue to be a highly leveraged platform for engaging employees.

Organizational Information
Founded in 1902 and headquartered in Saint Paul, Minnesota, 3M has grown into a multinational conglomerate corporation and global business leader. With an operating philosophy of a “borderless exchange and expansion of ideas,” 3M currently employs 89,000 employees across more than 70 countries. The company operates 216 manufacturing plants in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America, including in 30 US states. Its five Business Groups are Consumer; Electronics and Energy; Health Care; Industrial; and Safety and Graphics. Some of its well-known brands include Post-it notes, Scotch tapes, and Filtrete home air filters. In 2013, the company reported $4.66 billion in net income.