



September 16, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New research finds leadership training contributes to more engaged workforce at nonprofit organizations

Inaugural report unveiled from Kansas Leadership Center's Third Floor Research

Wichita, Kan. – Third Floor Research—the research partnership between the Kansas Leadership Center and Kansas State University's Staley School of Leadership Studies—has released its first report which investigated the influence that a leadership development program had on employee leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes in a nonprofit organization.

The result: Widespread leadership development up and down the org chart contributes to a more engaged workforce. In fact, after an immersive training experience, employees are:

- More committed to their organization
- More hopeful about the organization's future
- More satisfied with their job

“After a year of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, we have significant evidence that participation in leadership development programs positively shifted how participants ‘see’ and ‘do’ their work. Based off the findings, our study includes specific recommendations that will be relevant to executives, hiring managers and HR directors in nonprofit organizations – and the foundations that fund them – who are looking for ways to improve employee morale, mitigate systemic overload and reduce turnover,” said lead researcher Mary Banwart, associate professor of communication studies and director of the Institute for Leadership Studies at the University of Kansas.

The study, which can be [downloaded here](#), found that leadership training most impacted individual growth mindset when employees participated in a second training program after an initial experience. Saturating an organization with leadership development also leads to employees engaging more collaboratively and across units in the organization.

“From the front desk to the c-suite, it’s encouraging to see the difference leadership training can have on employees and the nonprofits where they work. With organizational missions expanding and workloads increasing throughout the sector, employees at all levels are taking on more, often with less support. These findings and recommendations can really make a difference on burnout across the board,” said Dr. Tim Steffensmeier, professor and director of the leadership communication doctoral program at the Staley School and director of research at KLC.

“Leadership Development and Employee Engagement in Nonprofit Organizations” is the first study to come out of Third Floor Research, and was conducted by Banwart, Elnaz Parviz,

graduate teaching assistant and assistant introductory course director in the communication studies department at the University of Kansas; and Steffensmeier.

Third Floor Research plans to unveil additional reports throughout the remaining months of 2020.

“When we launched Third Floor Research in 2018, we knew it had the potential to be a game changer for Kansas organizations, companies and communities,” said Ed O’Malley, KLC president and CEO. “Now, with the first study published and more to be released this year, we can see how this robust, world-class initiative will fuel the future development of leadership training in Kansas and beyond.”

To learn more about Third Floor Research, visit kansasleadershipcenter.org/third-floor-research/.

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About the Kansas Leadership Center

The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) is a singular educational organization founded to foster civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities. Its programs and teachings present leadership as an activity available to anyone at any time. KLC offers training for organizations, teams and individuals as well as advanced programs for leadership development practitioners. It provides development grants for civically oriented organizations in Kansas, partners with community leadership programs and offers customized trainings for businesses and non-profits alike. KLC hosts civic leadership forums and encourages Kansans to take active part in public life for the common good. KLC Press publishes books on leadership and The Journal, a nationally recognized, award-winning civic issues magazine. Based in Wichita, KLC receives core funding from the Kansas Health Foundation. Learn more at www.kansasleadershipcenter.org.

About Third Floor Research

Third Floor Research is an applied research center operated through a partnership between the Kansas Leadership Center and Kansas State University’s Staley School of Leadership Studies. The global research program was designed by KLC staff alongside eight expert researchers and practitioners from the Harvard Kennedy School, Chile, Israel and the states of Colorado, Kansas and Wisconsin. Third Floor Research focuses on the impact of leadership training and contributes to global learnings in the field of leadership and adaptive change processes. It creates useful findings that address individual development, organizational impact, and community capacity. Learn more at <https://kansasleadershipcenter.org/third-floor-research/>.

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