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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New research finds leadership training for employees in high-tech companies leads to shift in organizational culture

Report 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 latest report which investigated the influence that leadership development training had on changing how employees perceive and exercise leadership, as well as how they define and address challenges across a global organization in the high-tech industry.

The result: Saturating a high-tech company with leadership development leads to a shift in organizational culture. Engineers and their teams:

- Listen more and communicate more openly
- Collaborate and consult across teams to solve problems more effectively
- Shift the way they tackle problems, exploring conflicting viewpoints and conducting experiments to find better solutions.

“We know that the rate of change in the technology sector is accelerating. And to keep pace with rapid innovation, employees must be agile and able to quickly adapt to change. In this context, we were curious—if employees working for an organization in the high-tech industry sector engaged in leadership development training, would they start to seize more opportunities and solve problems faster? We now have significant evidence that they will,” said Dr. Tim Steffensmeier, professor and director of the leadership communication doctoral program at the Staley School and director of research at KLC.

The study, which can be [downloaded here](#), found that leadership development training made employees better at collaborative problem-solving, listening to one another and communication among peers. This shift in culture, processes and mindset made an organization more prepared to confidently implement experimental initiatives to find more sustainable solutions to its challenges.

“Our research found that employees who understand they can exercise leadership themselves, regardless of their role or authority, feel more confident in doing so. As a result, these individuals think about and perform their work differently because of this new understanding of leadership,” said Tamas Kowalik, graduate research assistant working with Steffensmeier at the Staley School.

The research took place over the course of two years and primarily focused on qualitative data collection and analysis. For Phase I, 228 individuals completed a post-survey questionnaire following a five-week leadership development program. In Phase II, interviews were conducted

with employees at one business site where KLC trainings had been happening for two years with employees across the organization.

“Leadership Development for Global Organizations in the High-tech Industry” is the second study to come out of Third Floor Research, and was conducted by Steffensmeier, Kowalik, and Tim O’Brien, lecturer in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and faculty chair of the Leadership for the 21st Century program (L21).

Third Floor Research plans to unveil additional reports throughout the remaining months of 2020. 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 Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, 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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