

Case Study: Building a new manager onboarding program

From scattered training to a clear leadership pathway.

Client Backdrop

A rapidly growing organization recognized the need to strengthen its leadership pipeline by supporting new managers earlier in their journey. Their existing manager training program was designed for more tenured leaders, leaving a critical gap for first-time managers.

Challenge

The organization faced several challenges:

- Only one manager training program, focused on experienced leaders
- No foundational development pathway for new managers
- L&D programs created reactively over time to solve past problems, many of which were no longer relevant
- Programs that were disconnected and did not build upon one another
- No consistent leadership competency model across levels
- No clear throughline showing how expectations evolve from Manager to Director to VP to Executive

The core need: Create a cohesive, scalable foundation for new manager effectiveness and long-term leadership growth.

Our Approach

Ama La Vida conducted a comprehensive intake to understand:

- The organization's leadership competencies
- Expectations of managers and desired leadership behaviors
- Current and future organizational growth
- All existing leadership development programs and where they were misaligned

Key Insights

Strategic conversations revealed that:

- L&D programs had been created to solve isolated problems from the past
- Many programs no longer addressed current needs
- Leadership programs lacked connection, cohesion, and a progression path
- Leadership expectations were unclear and inconsistent across levels

Designing a Cohesive Leadership Throughline

To create clarity and alignment, we:

1. Established one unified leadership mindset for all people leaders
2. Identified core leadership competencies required at every level
3. Differentiated how these competencies show up from Manager to Executive
4. Assessed new managers to understand what senior leaders and the organization needed from them
5. Identified five foundational skillsets that all new managers must develop

Program Design

The final New Manager Onboarding Program included:

- A tactical 30 day onboarding pathway
- Pre work in the LMS to build foundational knowledge
- Live, interactive workshops focused on essential leadership skills
- Post workshop LMS modules to reinforce application
- Organizational touchpoints that strengthened alignment and support
- Manager guides, talking points, and fully developed LMS content

Impact

The organization achieved:

- One unified leadership mindset for all people leaders
- A shared competency model that clearly differentiates expectations across levels
- A cohesive foundation for new manager development
- A clear leadership progression from Manager to Executive
- Alignment and integration across all L&D programs, shifting from disconnected interventions to a cohesive development journey

The organization now has a scalable system for developing confident, capable new managers and a strong foundation for long-term leadership growth.