

CHAPTER 1

Challenges We Faced and Lessons We Learned

Eva Arnell and Ernie Turner

This chapter will focus on some of the challenges and lessons that the authors recall during their ten year experience with the Volvo Truck Global Management Development Program, more commonly called the VTM (Volvo Truck Management) Program. We will use the first person plural to express our joint feelings, thoughts and actions and the third person singular when referring to just one of us or some one else to ensure accuracy and clarity.

We will begin with a brief overview of the Volvo Truck Corporation's (VTC) challenge in 1989, when the preparations for the VTM Program began, followed by an outline of the VTM Program itself. Then we will describe some of the challenges we faced and the lessons we learned. We have given subheadings for each of these challenges, indicating key success factors.

This is not meant to be an in-depth history of the VTM Program. Our hope is that you, our readers, and we will both be able to learn from our experiences and apply some of these lessons in current and future leadership development programs elsewhere.

BACKGROUND ON VTC AND THE VTM PROGRAM

The Volvo Truck Corporation (VTC) in 1989 was one of several Volvo companies including Car, Bus, Aero and Penta. VTC has about 25,000 employees working in more than 70 countries and could be described as being an international company with a Swedish base. The truck industry was beginning to consolidate through mergers, acquisitions and alliances; the European Community was coming together; the world was quickly “going global” and VTC was facing increasing pressures to become a global player and compete outside its home market. The “handwriting was on the wall” – VTC had to change if it intended to remain one of the global truck companies over the next decade. The implications for management and leadership development were obvious: a new kind of global leadership culture was needed.

From this environment, the VTM Program was designed to address the emerging needs of VTC. What follows is a brief summary of the main VTM Program principles for the first six programs 1990-1996.

Purpose

- Develop global leaders who understand and can work in cross-culturally, cross-functionally and cross-regionally high performing teams.
- Develop leaders with self-knowledge, who thrive on the challenge of change in an uncertain environment and question the status quo.
- Solve current strategic business challenges assigned to project teams.
- Become more familiar with the VTC organization and build a network of change leaders – globally, regionally and functionally.
- Apply and transfer lessons from the program back to the organization.
- Change behavior; ensure that learning lasts.

Participants

- The target group was senior managers who were two levels below the top executive management team.
- Each program had 16-25 participants from all the major regions where Volvo Truck operated.

- Each participant was nominated by executive management, but still had to apply and go through an interview process before being finally selected.

Design

- 4-5 off-site meetings of 2-5 days each spread over a 6-month period.
- Half of the total time was allocated to project work on current business challenges and the other half to other developmental outcomes, i.e. professional development, business savvy, organizational change, diversity challenges (culture and gender), globalization, environmental and community responsibilities.
- Each off-site meeting was held in a different region where Volvo Truck operated.

Projects

- Current business challenges were selected by the executive management team and the VTM Program staff, to be given as assignments for the participants to work on during the course of the VTM Program. These projects served as the primary arena for the learning environment.
- Each business challenge had a client – someone inside VTC who had the responsibility for addressing that challenge and who was also an advocate of our Action Reflection Learning (ARL) philosophy.

Program organization

- A program advisory board representing members from the executive management team.
- The program director was a Volvo Truck internal resource as was the program coordinator.
- Learning coaches were selected from the MiL Institute and LIM (Leadership in International Management).
- The different Volvo Truck locations hosted program meetings and supported with local resources.
- Resource people were invited into the program from inside and outside VTC depending upon the specific needs and desired outcomes.

Learning principles

- Systemic: We designed and ran the program considering learning opportunities across multiple integrated systems – personal, functional, business, financial, regional, corporate, customer, political, global and ecological.
- Results-oriented: We all worked for outcomes on five levels – personal, professional, team, organizational and business.
- Organic and dynamic: The learning coaches and participants worked with the real issues and questions that appeared at the moment.
- Learning coach supported: Learning coaches had a “just in time” learning contract with the participants so that they could focus on the process and look for learning opportunities whenever and wherever they occurred.
- Challenge-centered learning: We used real and current business challenges as the arena for learning.
- Earning while learning: We selected projects that could provide the required learning opportunities to the participants and also provide a Return on Investment (ROI) to VTC.
- Sequential and continuous: Learning is incremental and ongoing; it requires continual reinforcement.
- Appreciative: Learning coaches focused first on what was going well and then helped their teams dream and design what could be.
- Learning style conscious: We provided learning opportunities to accommodate and challenge each learning style.
- Participants as resources: We utilized everyone’s experience and expertise; we were all learning together with and from one another; we became a learning community.
- Transformational focus: We began with awareness as the first step; changed intentions and behavior were our goals.
- Transferring and teaching: Participants were encouraged to take their lessons “back home” and try them out in their coaching of others. The staff systematically evaluated each program and transferred the learning to the next program.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

The challenges appeared from the very beginning and so did the lessons. Existing within VTC was the Personnel and Leadership Development Council, with members from the executive board, a steering board for competence development issues. In 1989 this board requested Eva Arnell, who was responsible for Leadership and Competence Development in Volvo Truck, to develop the new overall approach for leadership development.

Eva had participated in the MiL network for many years and was familiar with their ARL concepts and programs. She had recently participated in a MiL program focused on designing and running leadership and organizational development programs according to the ARL learning philosophy. Based on this very positive MiL experience, she recognized that increased capacity to learn and change was needed for VTC's future success.

Corporate sponsorship

So she began by running the idea by her superior, the Vice President of HR (VPHR). When he heard that there would be only 20 participants each year, he remarked that the need was for 200 the next year. Eva responded by asking if the need was for "quantity or quality" and explained the valuable learning that would occur during the program between participants and the organization. VPHR decided to support the idea and gave Eva the green light – providing she could get the CEO on board.

Soon into Eva's initial conversation with the CEO on what such a leadership development program could do for Volvo Truck Corporation, he stopped her and said, "Eva, let's not waste our time and VTC's money; we both know that leaders are born and not made." Eva responded that she disagreed and firmly believed that leadership could be developed and, in fact, that was her role. He admitted that it was true she had that role and he agreed that if she could present a solid business case in doing this, then he would allow her to run the program.

Finally, Eva was able to launch the first program by only allowing project assignments that could earn money for the company. The CEO agreed to be the corporate sponsor and to attend the launch of the program. He also agreed to attend the final session six months later when the teams reported on the final results of their project work as well as their personal and professional learning.

The launch went off without a problem and no one suspected that the CEO was not a strong supporter. During the final session Ernie Turner, one of the program learning coaches, sat next to the CEO. Between one of the four project presentations he turned to Ernie and said, “I don’t know if you were aware, but I was not in favor of this program in the beginning. I’ve since changed my mind – not just because the projects were financially successful but because I’ve seen changed behavior from a number of these managers. Now I’m a true supporter.”

Our lessons were:

- Stand firm with your beliefs and don’t be afraid to disagree with the CEO.
- Be creative, make it happen; where there’s a will, there’s a way.
- Let the results speak for themselves.
- Sometimes your biggest skeptic can become a strong supporter.

Real projects with supportive clients

Another challenge during the first program in 1990 was finding five “clients” with strategic projects – one for each of the five project teams. Each client had to have a real business challenge where a project team could provide real value during the course of the program. Each client needed to be available to his/her team and ensure that his/her team had access to the rest of the system. Each client was not to use the team to promote his/her own desired outcome. The client should also be open to working with the team rather than expecting the team to work for him/her. Eva had to “twist arms” to get five clients for the first program. Some were more available than others. Some of the coaches had to meet with their team’s client to hold them back from either guiding too much or not being available enough.

Due to the positive results that the teams produced during the first program, it was much easier to attract clients for subsequent programs. We communicated these results in a VTM newsletter. As a result, we had the reverse problem of having more available clients than we could accept for each successive program. Thus, our challenge for later programs was to establish clear criteria and a selection process that prospective clients received so that all of us – program staff and clients – were working with common guidelines. These guidelines made it easier to make sound decisions on the selection of projects and clients. It also created competition within the company and increased the quality of the project proposals.

Our lessons were:

- There's nothing like results to attract clients.
- Word of mouth and the VTM newsletter were complementary communication vehicles; both were important for getting the word out.
- Ensure that there is a clear business incentive in each project.
- Contract clearly the role and expectations of clients they were coached to expect and ask for results in two areas – 1) savings or earnings related to the task and 2) transformation in leadership and teamwork.
- Attracting and selecting an appropriate project and a suitable client is not easy and deserves adequate time and consideration; this is one of the key critical success factors.

Staff alignment

One of the biggest challenges encountered during the first program was having two program directors – Eva for VTC and a member of the MiL staff. The relationship seemed to work well during the preparation and at the beginning Eva was willing to let the MiL program director make most of the program design decisions. As time went on, Eva and VTM's advisory board were consulted less and less on key program decisions and by the fourth session of the five session program, communication within the program staff had basically ended. This, of course, made it very difficult for Eva to learn from prior experiences or to influence the program process. The learning coaches weren't informed of program

changes until the last moment so they, too, had little opportunity to influence the program design. And the participants were very sensitive to what was going on; they could feel the lack of teamwork and alignment among the staff and wondered how we could coach them on their teamwork and have such a poor process ourselves.

This was not acceptable to neither VTC nor MiL, so a special meeting was called by Eva and the management of MiL in which the vice president of MiL mediated the relationship. The issues were put on the table and a strategy was agreed upon that caused minimal disruption to the program and allowed opportunities for everyone to learn. The MiL VP, Sven Åke Nilsson, then agreed to become a learning coach in the next program, and Eva agreed to take on the responsibility as the sole director of the program. So, instead of having two program directors, four learning coaches and one coordinator – as in the first program – the program staff for the second program was slimmed down to one program director (Eva), three learning coaches (Ernie, Sven Åke and an internal coach) and one coordinator.

Fortunately, the learning from this experience was rich:

- Roles and relationships including norms concerning communicating and decision-making need to be contracted clearly and reviewed periodically.
- In most cases one program director is enough and if there is a capable company person with the proper familiarity with the learning philosophy, it should probably be this person.
- Ensure that all the staff have opportunities to influence the design; their input is key to the subtle and important adjustments that need to be made daily in an ARL program.
- The staff needs to model the kind of teamwork that they expect their teams to emulate and evolve. “Being” the change is more potent than talking about it.

Pragmatic design

Our design for the first program consisted of five off-site meetings of three to four days each. Due to the many subject areas we intended to

cover in the program, this didn't leave much time for project work. We expected that the teams would do most of their project work between the off-site meetings and most of it without the support of the learning coaches. This presented a challenge to the teams to find the additional time required to adequately complete their projects by the fifth meeting and still manage their regular jobs "back home".

So after the first program, we in the new program staff spent three days reflecting upon the first program, rebuilding ourselves as a staff team, extracting lessons and refining the program design. We established clear roles, set working norms for ourselves, provided feedback and took time to get to know one another. We defined the criteria for selecting participants in order to get a diverse mix representing different locations, regions, functions and cultures. We also reduced the number of program off-site meetings from five to four and lengthened each meeting to a full five days. We split each five-day session evenly between project work and pre-planned program activities. This gave the project teams more scheduled time to work on their projects and the learning coaches more time to work with their teams on process and learning. Since the program visited different Volvo Truck locations around the world, it also became cost efficient to have it more concentrated.

Some valuable lessons came out of this program redesign:

- It is absolutely critical for the program staff to take the time to become a team that can and will set a standard and be a model for teamwork.
- Reflection and dialogue within the staff team are key to extracting the lessons; it doesn't "just happen".
- Eliminating one session and adding some time to the other sessions had a big impact on the quantity and quality of work the teams could accomplish and the amount of coaching the learning coaches could provide.

Integrated program

For the first couple of VTM Programs we contracted BTS (Business Training Systems) to design and run a four-year business simulation,

which filled up most of the first two five-day sessions. BTS had its own staff who were expert in their field of designing and running business games. Our challenge was to ensure that there was a link between the business game and the project work.

So we met with the staff of BTS and explained to them the overall program philosophy, the objectives and outcomes we expected from both the business game and the project work. From these outcomes we were able to design a role for the learning coaches during the business game that complemented the role of the BTS staff. The learning coaches paid attention to the project teams' teamwork during the business game and contracted the right to stop them in their process so that they could learn about leadership and teamwork. This was basically the same contract that we had while they worked on their projects. The lessons from one carried over to the other. The result was that we were able to multiply the learning opportunities during the business game and ensure better integration of all components.

The lessons were clear:

- Ensure that all staff are supporting one another in achieving the program outcomes.
- Maintain a systemic and aligned perspective to ensure integration.
- Always look for multiple learning opportunities.

Dealing with the unexpected

From the very first program we learned that the territory and the map are never the same. No matter how well we planned, something always “came up” that we did not expect.

In 1993, VTM 3 got off to a great start; participants and staff were “in sync”; we had ironed most of the “kinks” during the first two programs. The changed staff structure, with only two learning coaches, taking care of two project teams each, had proven to be successful. The first two off-site meetings went very smoothly. However, shortly before the third, Sven Åke Nilsson, one of the learning coaches and MiL's senior vice president, died unexpectedly during the summer holidays. This was a deep

loss of a friend, colleague, learning coach and valuable member of our small but efficient staff team. After mourning his passing, we were faced with a difficult question: Were we going to find a replacement half way through the program or “make do” with the team we had? We chose the later and Eva doubled as a program director and learning coach. By this time Eva was very familiar with the learning coach role having been a participant in a MiL program earlier and having been the program director of VTM. So necessity and a desire to stretch enabled Eva to jump into this role with the understanding and support of her newly acquired project teams.

As a staff, we were aware that we were undertaking a very difficult task. So we asked for everyone’s help. Somehow, with everyone pulling together, knowing this was not “ideal”, we turned a tragedy into a tribute to Sven Åke and a marvelous learning experience for participants and staff alike. We formed a very strong bond. Adversity brought out the best in everyone; we became a real learning community. Our reflection and dialogue sessions were intense and deep and this program received the highest evaluations of any other program so far.

So what did we learn?

- Ask for help; it’s not a sign of weakness and people will respond.
- A tragedy can become an opportunity for significant personal discovery and achievement.
- Death has a way of bringing “life” and new meaning into such an environment where reflection and development are valued.

Learning that lasts

“So how do you know if learning lasts?” was a question frequently asked by company executives, outsiders and us. Our immediate answer was, “You can see it in the changed lives of the participants.” This was good enough for the CEO but we felt there was more we could do to address this question. So, as often happens in life, a person with a desire to conduct some research on this question emerged as we were contemplating what else we could do. Sharon Lamm, an HR professional at Arco, attended a two-day conference in New York City conducted by LIM on

Action Reflection Learning where one of the graduates of a VTM Program talked about his transformational experience – as a leader, manager, husband and Sunday school teacher. This intrigued Sharon and within a short time she enrolled in Teachers College, Columbia University, and pursued her doctoral degree studying under Professor Victoria Marsick, one of LIM’s partners at the time.

Sharon’s interest in transformative learning, her need for a dissertation topic and VTC’s need for an answer to our learning-that-lasts question came together and Sharon was invited to conduct her research on the VTM Program involving in-depth interviews of 24 graduates from VTM Programs 2-5 as her target population. For more detail, see chapter 3 by Sharon Lamm.

Commitment to change

The greatest ingredient for change was the participants’ commitment to change. This commitment didn’t happen automatically. The change cycle doesn’t begin with commitment; it begins with awareness. So the first step in this change process was to provide multiple opportunities for the participants themselves to become more aware of what it was that they wanted (not necessarily needed) to change as the place to begin. Later many of their change “needs” became “wants” which made their commitment easier.

During VTM 5, 1994-95, we took a long look at what we could do as a staff to stimulate this commitment process and came up with the idea of the “Passion Contract”. The Passion Contract was based on the premise that participants would be more committed to change if they had an opportunity to develop it themselves around something that they felt passionate about and really *wanted* to change.

The VPHR became our corporate sponsor. He launched the idea by setting the context upon the belief that as leaders we all must continue to learn and change in order to lead. Each participant was invited to reflect upon something related to their current leadership behavior that they wanted to change and write it down in their learning journals as well as a “contract” format that we provided for them which included some

simple planning steps. Then they met with their learning partners, colleagues in the program with whom they could meet on a periodic basis, for an exchange and peer coaching session. Afterwards they were invited to share their Passion Contract with the larger group so that everyone could become a resource and support to them in the change process. As the program continued, participants were invited to add to their Passion Contracts and we provided time in the program for periodic peer coaching. Learning coaches also paid attention to the Passion Contracts of their project team members and offered one-on-one coaching.

As an example, one individual's Passion Contract was to encourage the CEO to require that a meeting protocol should be adopted by the entire company ensuring better organized meetings. Since so many meetings were unnecessary, poorly planned or poorly run and often attended by the wrong people, they resulted in wasted time, lost opportunity and frustration. He believed that millions of dollars could be saved and morale improved by following a simple meeting protocol (a planning checklist and a meeting format), which would result in better meetings. He was able to influence others in his group to join him and together they convinced the CEO to institute this protocol for major meetings across the company.

Other examples were more personal and included interrupting less, delegating more, overcoming fear of public speaking and not jumping to judgment so quickly.

What did we learn?

- Having a corporate sponsor with passion and position helped launch this concept and grounded it in the real purpose of VTM – changed behavior and learning that lasts.
- Having a framework and a plan and then revisiting this plan each session was vital in starting and then sustaining the momentum.
- Providing feedback and support from learning partners, learning coaches and the large group helped reinforce the commitment to change.
- Building upon what the participants wanted allowed them to take responsibility.

Inside/outside staff

One of our challenges was to ensure that the coaching technology was transferred to those within VTC who had the responsibility for supporting the participants and the multiple change processes after the program was over – namely key people in training and development departments at the different VTC locations.

We achieved this in part by bringing some of the current training and development professionals in Sweden, Belgium and USA in as learning coaches or resource persons. We could have done more by being more inclusive and systemic in our selection, training and follow up.

Lessons learned included:

- In planning a change process, be sure to have the follow-on strategy in place and have selected and developed those who understand the change challenges and have the tools, motivation and backing to support the individual and organizational change efforts after the program is over.
- A more rigorous learning coach development program would have ensured more consistent coaching by both the inside and outside learning coaches.
- Building internal learning coach competence in parallel with running the programs will increase the long term change and improvement needs in the company

Earning while learning

VTM was built upon the belief that results were what mattered; good intentions were not enough. And results were expected in two areas: 1) learning that lasts (changed behavior); 2) increased earnings and/or savings. This expectation was instilled in everyone (executive management, participants, clients, and staff) from the very beginning.

A secondary belief was that if the primary focus was on the learning, then the earning would follow. So as learning coaches our task was to pay close attention to the learning opportunities that organically presented themselves at the personal, professional, team and organizational

levels while the project teams worked on the business outcomes – their projects. It was not difficult for us as learning coaches to find multiple learning opportunities related to listening, communicating, planning, running effective meetings, making decisions, problem solving, giving and receiving feedback, having difficult conversations, making offers and requests, giving presentations, expressing feelings, etc. – all key leadership skills – while our project teams were working on their business challenges. As a result the project teams worked more effectively and efficiently and achieved better results with their business challenges.

Each program had several projects; here are the results from two of the business challenges:

One project team had the challenge of reducing the time it took for spare parts to get from Ghent to Poland. This took significantly impaired VTC's competitiveness – especially with Mercedes to whom they were losing market share. The project team (none of whom had logistics or parts and service backgrounds) worked with their client, his management team and the parts and service team. Together they created a strategy whereby they reduced the time it took to deliver spare parts – from 12 days to 48 hours – thus turning the business around. This resulted in an estimated \$7 million earnings in one year.

Another project team worked on the "Breakdown Project". Their task was to determine what implications a breakdown of a vehicle has for the entire system including customer, dealer, parts and service, warranty, and ultimately design and engineering. As part of the team's education on what the scope of their challenge was, they visited the largest dealer in Holland during their first week in Belgium. Little did they know that the dealer they chose to visit was even more eager to see them. He could hardly contain his frustration with the slow service his customers were receiving when a breakdown occurred. He announced to this newly formed project team that he was canceling his contract with Volvo Truck because his customers were unable to get their breakdowns repaired in a reasonable time. He said, "You folks think you're selling transportation; you're really selling 'flowers to market' or whatever the contents of a truck are and if a breakdown occurs without fast attention these flowers spoil and my customer loses business." The point was made. The team jumped into action immediately, and notified the current CEO who made a special trip to this dealer and worked out an agreement so that VTC did not lose this business. He also demonstrated a renewed commitment to customer service. This visit alone saved the company millions of dollars in business in addition to good will – of priceless value.

What did we learn or have reinforced?

- A team of non-experts often comes up with innovative solutions because they are not “wedded” to the way things have been done and because they simply ask “Why are we doing it this way, anyway?” and “Why not another way?” Two very powerful questions.
- Working on real business challenges where there is a financial consequence and a live customer brings a sense of reality that can never be achieved by a case study.
- It is possible for a leadership development program to pay for itself several times over by addressing projects where there are potential savings or earnings.

Walking the talk

Throughout the VTM Program we constantly reminded ourselves that we had to practice the principles that we preached – such as treating the participants as resources rather than students. So together we created two very useful instruments – 1) the HPTI (High Performing Team Instrument) which we used to measure our teamwork on a periodic basis and 2) our own 360 feedback instrument based upon Volvo’s values and future leadership competency requirements. Both of these instruments were very effective and popular because the participants “owned” them. They fit; they were practical; they worked. Later the 360 instrument was used as a model for performance management as well.

We always as a staff tried out the exercises that we used in the program. This was important because it improved our own teamwork and it also gave us a better appreciation of how the participants might experience a certain exercise.

We continuously asked ourselves and the participants – “How are we doing?” Feedback became a regular part of our process and was viewed as a gift so that we all could learn. We had an appreciative approach of giving feedback building upon what worked well before looking for ways to improve. This reinforced the concept that we are already doing some things well and perhaps are not even aware of them.

We believe that the environment influences our learning. So we paid attention to where we held our meetings off-site meetings and how we organized our space. For example, we held each of our program sessions in different locations. And for our third week, which had a special focus on personal development, we traveled someplace where everyone would feel a bit out of his/her natural environment so that we all could learn more about ourselves. India, China, and Brazil were memorable week #3 locations because of the deep diving we were able to do. And during these weeks we designed mini assignments where we went into the community for a day to discover the local culture. For example, during one program while we were in Curitiba, Brazil we split our large group into 3 subgroups. One group visited a farm; another group visited a favela; the third group went into a wealthy neighborhood. Each group interviewed the people they met to discover the challenges and opportunities as seen by the local residents. We all gained a deeper appreciation of how culture plays a significant role in personal and professional relationships. And we all discovered much more about ourselves and our own cultures. Then we looked at the activities and responsibilities that VTC was engaged in as a corporate community citizen.

We learned that:

- We're much more alike than we are different.
- These differences, however, can make a big difference.
- Participation in creating (new instruments, methods, exercises) also creates ownership which, in turn, leads to commitment.
- Corporate citizenship requires being an active member in one's local community as well as getting involved in global issues.

CONCLUSION

So was the VTM Program successful and if so, how do we know? This question needs to be answered from multiple perspectives – the participants', VTC's and ultimately the customer's. The program evaluations and Sharon's research attest to the participants' overwhelming belief that the program met or exceeded their personal expectations and was influential in transformative change. Although an ROI study was not conducted on all the projects, the majority of the clients felt that the project challenges were successfully addressed. In several instances we were able to see the direct positive results of the program from VTC's customers.

In conclusion and as a summary we have listed what we consider to be the key success factors for the VTM program from our perspective:

- *Support and backing of the CEO and senior managers.* We made sure that senior management understood the mission and objectives of the VTM program and were willing to stand up and support it.
- *Commitment of the clients for learning as well as project results.* The clients all realized that the project was the arena for learning about teamwork, consulting, change management, project management and leadership; they also expected concrete measurable results for each business challenge.
- *Learning coach alignment and teamwork.* It was vital that we as a staff modeled the kind of teamwork that we were expecting from the project teams; our actions reinforced our words and intentions; our curiosity and interest in learning set a standard for others; we experienced what we expected the participants to experience.
- *Integration of learning outcomes at five levels.* Personal, professional, team, organizational and business during each off-site meeting and linking the learning to on-the-job' applications.
- *Setting high expectations with the participants before week 1.* Through interviews with the participants and their supervisors, we were able to raise expectations and actually "start" the program even before our first meeting.
- *Competent and experienced learning coaches.* Our core team of learning coaches all had competence in building high performing teams

and developing leaders due to prior experience with other companies; we spent time planning, exchanging, debriefing and socializing together. We became friends as well as trusted colleagues.

- *Diverse learning opportunities that challenged and satisfied each learning style.* We designed the program so that the four major learning preferences (theoretical, experiential, reflective, experimental), were addressed.
- *Cross-cultural, cross-functional and cross-business mix of participants.* We made sure that the participants were representative of the global company culture from these three perspectives so that we had a microcosm of VTC in each program.
- *Compelling and challenging strategic projects.* We worked closely with the executive management team in selecting projects that were important to the company and where there was a clear ROI possibility.
- *The four-week design that allowed individuals to try out new behaviors.* The real goal was transformational change; we knew that sequential learning opportunities were required to achieve this change. Participants were encouraged to apply what they had learned during the off-site meetings between these sessions and report back what they discovered.
- *Strong leadership on the part of the program director.* The program director was the key link between the program and the company; her communication, facilitation and leadership skills were the glue that kept the different systems (participants, staff, clients and executive management team) all aligned.

Writing this chapter has allowed us to relive and share some important memories from our lives as professionals and as persons. We have learned many lessons, sometimes more than once. We have acquired a very rich network of colleagues and friends. In some small ways we have been able to contribute and add value to the lives of others and thus enable Volvo Truck to become a better place to work and a better producer of trucks. And hopefully, you, our readers, will benefit from our experiences as well. After all, this is why we're in this business – to learn and add value.