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## Case 2: Global Shared Services, McDonald's Corporation

As the world's leading foodservice retailer serving nearly 70 million customers daily in more than 100 countries, McDonald's recognizes the importance of having good people in place in order to deliver an exceptional customer experience. McDonald's has a rich history of developing leaders. Founder Ray Kroc, once said, "As long as you're green, you're growing." McDonald's supports this philosophy and commitment to their people by providing opportunity, nurturing talent, developing leaders, and rewarding achievement. This is evident in McDonald's



tradition of promoting from within: nearly half of corporate managers and 60% of owner-operators started as crew members.

For many people, McDonald's represents a first job—a place to develop basic skills that can help them achieve success in future life pursuits. For others, McDonald's represents a pathway to a long-term career that provides rewarding opportunities to grow, contribute, and advance over many years. McDonald's values state their belief that a team of well-trained individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences, working together in an environment that fosters respect and drives high engagement, is essential to their continued success.

**Shared Services Business Challenge.** McDonald's Shared Services team began their partnership with us in 2008. At that time, Shared Services was part of McDonald's IT group, which was decentralized in structure, but needed to function as a cohesive team to drive common global solutions. The CIO recognized the importance of developing teamwork and alignment across IT leaders and engaged us to lead this effort. After the IT Leadership Team had gone through The Leadership Circle process, the CIO asked each of the officers, including Kelvin McLaurin, then VP of Shared Services, to engage their teams in the program.

Soon after The Leadership Circle was introduced, the Shared Services organization evolved into Global Shared Services (GSS) and became the first global function at McDonald's. McLaurin recalls: "We needed to build a diverse, global team with leaders who could expand beyond their current capabilities." He wanted to establish leadership effectiveness as a priority early with the team he was building and leverage the Leadership System to make this a reality.

In 2012, McLaurin transitioned to a role leading McDonald's Finance Transformation. Debbie Ballard, who had been a member of the GSS Leadership Team since 2005, took over leadership of the GSS organization. Having experienced the value of The Leadership Circle, she was already a supporter of the Profile and its benefits. Ballard explains: "The Leadership Circle process helps me professionally and personally. It enables me to step back and see why I am behaving the way I am behaving, and it helps me grow as a leader and to model the things that I am asking my leadership team to do." GSS continued their focus on leadership development and further engrained The Leadership Circle program into its culture.

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**Strategic Solution: The Leadership Circle.** When The Leadership Circle was introduced in 2008, the GSS leadership team was skeptical. Introducing an exercise that required not only getting feedback about individual strengths and opportunities, but then sharing publicly with their fellow team members would not be easy. However, the team committed to the process, knowing the first session would be hard, but trusting that outcomes would make it worthwhile.

Despite the initial hesitation, the GSS has become the group that applies The Leadership Circle most holistically and consistently. While other groups at McDonald's leverage the Profile, GSS is unique in that they continue to use public feedback with each team member talking about their strengths and weaknesses in front of the group. McLaurin explains: "The Leadership Circle has become the common language across the GSS Leadership Team to onboard and develop our leaders." As new members join the leadership team, either from GSS or a support partner, they are expected to participate in The Leadership Circle. GSS also engages their high-potential managers in the process. In 2014, GSS added The Leadership Circle Pulse Survey to hone in on opportunity areas and ensure more frequent feedback to drive development in those areas.

McLaurin, who now leads Finance Transformation, brought The Leadership Circle practice to his new leadership team as well in September 2014. In addition, the Finance Transformation team also incorporated individual LCP assessment with team development opportunities.

**Outcomes.** The Leadership Circle helped GSS to become a true, shared leadership team and build a culture of openness, support, trust, and high performance. Ballard explains: "It is part of our DNA, part of who we are. We have now done multiple offsite meetings with our leadership team focusing on individual and collective effectiveness. As a result, we have forged a cohesive, high-performing leadership culture and system."

Team members are empowered to mentor each other, talk openly about their opportunities, and gain support using a common language. Each leader's candor, paired with their support for one another, enables GSS to drive business results at an accelerated pace. Instead of ignoring issues that could hinder progress, the team talks through them.

Since the team respects The Leadership Circle process and one another, gaining awareness of strengths creates a culture of trust and support. Ballard notes: "Leaders were afraid at first of publicly showing people their

development opportunities, but then they see that this supportive environment is designed to help you become a better leader, not discourage or embarrass you.”

The culture that The Leadership Circle has helped to create in GSS contributes to their success: “We achieved our five-year strategic plan in only three years, and then set in place the GSS 2020 Strategy to continue our momentum toward our vision to be a world-class shared services organization.” Both McLaurin and Ballard continue to be strong advocates for The Leadership Circle process, driving application in their organizations and sharing their experiences with others in the McDonald’s System.

McDonald’s Shared Services (GSS)

In response to the Leadership Circle process, a strong plant manager, Mike Jett, made leadership development a strategic priority and was named Plant Manager for HPPG since 2009. He epitomizes what makes Honda such a great company. In 2011,

long leadership development effort called the Honda Leadership Summit (HLS). Two groups of senior leaders come together twice every year to start the process of developing their leadership. This program is designed and led by the Honda OD team, along with other senior executive leaders. In 2011, Honda asked us to work with them on part of the development of a five-day program followed by a year of work.

HLS includes the Leadership Circle Profile and the Promise of Leadership workshop—an orientation to the Leadership Circle developmental framework. In addition, we work with the leaders throughout the entire year of their program. We use our Leader-to-Leader process—face-to-face and virtual development sessions focused on specific topics, and accountability.

other month to work on live leadership and business-relevant issues. The program was learned and what impact the year had on the operations. This is a systemic, whole systems program that follows all of the criteria of what