

# ➤ Leadership Productivity Portal

InterContinental Hotels Group

This is a study of how IHG India uses the company's global online leadership development community. The award-winning community was designed, built and is run by Phil Dourado Business Communications Ltd.

# LEADERSHIP PRODUCTIVITY PORTAL

## OVERVIEW

To drive leadership productivity, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) establishes an exclusive online portal for its leaders that enables them to capitalize on the expertise of the leadership team and execution-, not just development-, oriented leader workflow tools.

## SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

### **Facilitate connections between demand and supply of leadership expertise**

IHG's portal facilitates informal, yet productive, connections between leaders in need of guidance and leaders with relevant, proven expertise.

### **Embed- not just development-oriented tools into leadership workflow**

IHG disseminates activity-targeted resources across leaders' annual workflow to help them execute recurring leadership tasks more effectively.

### **Enable leader storytelling to inspire successful (leadership) behaviors**

IHG sources and contextualizes actionable, execution-focused success stories from inside and outside the organization.

### **Decorporatize the user experience to drive leader engagement**

IHG's portal design philosophy caters to leader preferences by ensuring the portal is truly leader-driven in appearance and usage.

## COMPANY SNAPSHOT

### **InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)**

|             |                         |                                                                           |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Industry:   | Hospitality             | With more than 658,348 rooms worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group     |
| 2011 Sales: | US\$20.2 B <sup>1</sup> | (IHG) is the world's largest hotel chain by room count. There are 4,480   |
| Employees:  | 345,000                 | IHG-branded hotels which operate across 100 countries and territories.    |
|             |                         | It owns nine hotel brands including Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza, Hotel |
|             |                         | Indigo, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, Candlewood Suites EVEN    |
|             |                         | Hotels and HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts.                                    |

<sup>1</sup> Includes Franchise Partners. 2011 Revenue for IHG: US\$1.8 B.

IHG enables leadership productivity by facilitating high-impact connections and embedding relevant expertise into leader workflow.

- While conventional leadership development portals do provide value, they are seldom used and often lack relevance to day-to-day activities.
- IHG's leadership portal is exclusively for leaders and focuses on providing productivity-enabling guidance and support throughout the year.

### Portal Statistics

- Piloted in Asia in 2009
- Open to all IHG leaders by invitation from the CEO
- 24/7 available access
- Costs approximately US\$ 450 per member per year

# PROVIDE EXPERTISE AND ENABLING TOOLS TO DRIVE LEADERSHIP PRODUCTIVITY

## Primary Components of IHG's Leadership Productivity Portal

1

### Scalable Expertise Exchange

IHG enables leadership productivity by connecting leader demand for support and leader ability (and willingness) to provide guidance.

2

### Leadership Lifecycle Enablement

IHG drives leader performance by disseminating best-practice solutions and guidance across the leadership workflow.



3

### Replicable Success Stories

IHG helps leaders internalize and replicate successful leadership behaviors through actionable, execution-focused success stories.

4

### Decorporatized Design Philosophy

IHG drives leader productivity by carefully considering leader resistance to formal learning and lack of time when designing the portal.

SOLUTION  
OVERVIEW

COMPONENT 1  
SCALABLE  
EXPERTISE  
EXCHANGE

COMPONENT 2  
LEADERSHIP  
LIFECYCLE  
ENABLEMENT

COMPONENT 3  
REPLICABLE  
SUCCESS  
STORIES

COMPONENT 4  
DECORPORATIZED  
DESIGN  
PHILOSOPHY

RESULTS

Facilitate informal, yet productive connections between leaders in need of guidance and leaders with relevant, proven expertise.

- Siloed leadership operations often cause leaders across the business to become disconnected from each other, resulting in missed opportunities to leverage synergies and share internal best practices.

- The portal enables leaders to find expertise through three informal networking options:

- Self Identified Connections
- Coach Suggested Connections
- Topic Driven Connections

### The Coach

The coach is an externally contracted team of four individuals, spread across regions, responsible for facilitating connections, managing content, and maintaining focus of discussions on the portal.

# FACILITATE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE

## IHG Leader



- Name: Gary Sim
- Role: VP of Sales, IHG Hong Kong
- Priority: Growth in Emerging Markets

## Informal Networking Options

### 1 Self Identified Connections

Leaders can find and directly message other leaders by searching profiles on the portal.



**Liz Getling**  
GM  
Rio de Janeiro | Hospitality Management

● Online (Contact me)

1 Career Highlights

2 IHG Experience

3 Contact Me for Help on

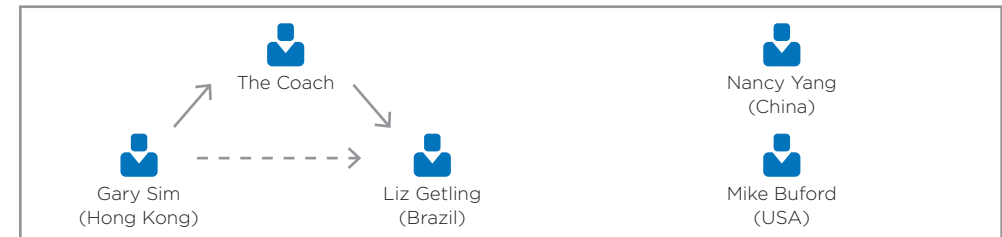
- Seconded to IHG China to train upcoming **emerging market** leaders on successful growth strategies
- 2007 Marketer of the Year Award in Brazil
- Five years in the Marketing Function
- Seven years in L&D
- **Emerging markets**
- Securing additional staff in your hotel
- Employer branding

Send a message



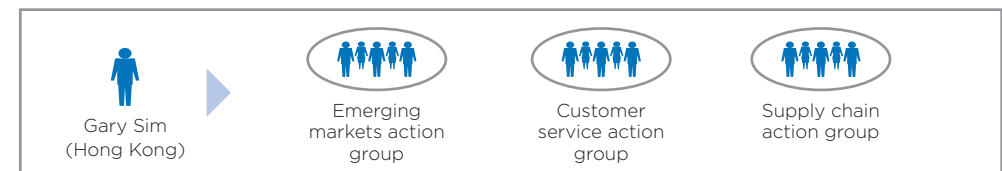
### 2 Coach Suggested Connections

Leaders can ask The Coach for guidance on who to reach out to on the portal.



### 3 Topic Driven Connections

Leaders can join targeted, topic-specific discussion forums to connect with other leaders.



Embed activity-targeted resources across leaders' annual workflow to help (less tenured) leaders execute recurring leadership tasks more effectively.

- The Coach regularly engages with key stakeholders across the business to source successful leadership tools, tips, and guidance for the portal, all-the-while ensuring they are highly relevant and in-line with leader needs.
- Given that The Coach is an externally-contracted team, it acts as a trusted, unbiased advisor for leaders on the portal.
- Tools and guidance uploaded to the portal must be simple, productivity-enabling resources that are applicable across regions and easily implemented by other leaders.

# ENABLE THE ANNUAL LEADERSHIP LIFECYCLE

## Annual Leadership Workflow Enablement

### Activity-focused Resources

*Illustrative*

#### Sample Q2 Resources

##### April

- Corporate Strategy Framework (tool)  
*Source: IHG China*
- Five Key Items to Include in your Plan (checklist)  
*Source: IHG India*

##### May

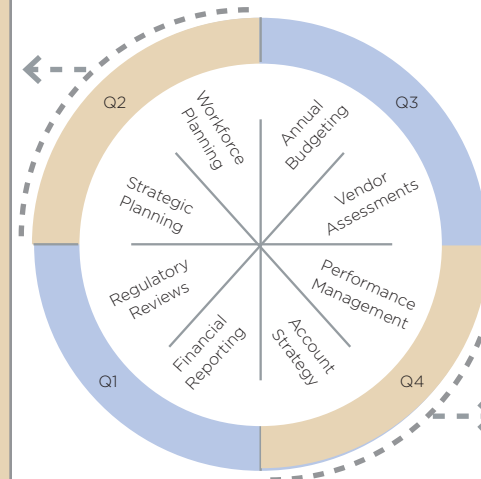
- Differentiated Branding (toolkit)  
*Source: Corporate Marketing*
- How to Give "Magic" Service (video)  
*Source: Corporate L&D Team*

##### June

- How to Champion Change (interview)  
*Source: GM, IHG Brazil*
- Leadership Conference Insights (summary brief)  
*Source: The Coach*

### Annual Business Cycle

*Illustrative*



### Activity-focused Resources

*Illustrative*

#### Sample Q4 Resources

##### October

- Identifying New Revenue Sources (brief tips)  
*Source: Multiple*
- Building Influencing Skills (e-learning module)  
*Source: Corporate L&D Team*

##### November

- Performance Evaluation Framework (tool)  
*Source: IHG Finland*
- Targeted Sales Conversations (video)  
*Source: Corporate L&D Team*

##### December

- Effective Performance Reviews (interview)  
*Source: Chief Human Resources Officer*
- Cost Cutting Framework (checklist)  
*Source: IHG Lebanon*

Help inexperienced leaders inspire successful (leadership) behaviors by providing them replicable, high-impact stories.

- While successful leadership practices occur everyday, companies generally fail to contextualize the lessons and share them across the business
- The Coach sources high-impact stories internally and externally and puts them in IHG's context, providing inexperienced leaders the stories they need to inspire innovation and impact across their teams.
- Stories that are shared with leaders should be replicable, memorable, and yield proven results.

#### Examples of Internal Stories

- Steps followed to achieve high team-engagement
- Activities implemented that led to cost reductions
- Practices followed that generated quick revenue
- Coaching activities that accelerated development.

# HELP LEADERS USE STORIES TO MULTIPLY SUCCESSFUL (LEADERSHIP) BEHAVIORS

## Case-in-Point: Find Me an Olive Exercise

**1**

**Transferable Stories**

Translating the stories to clear action steps increases the likelihood that leaders will replicate the practice in their teams.

**Find Me an Olive**

A simple exercise to involve people in cost-saving

**Leaders Tools**

**This tool will help you**

Engage people to question "how we do things" and make recommendations on how we can do them even better, more simply, or more cost effectively

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**I. The Exercise—Find Me an Olive!**

"American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one olive from each salad served in first class."

- Share the American Airlines story with your management team.
- Task each one of them with cascading the story down through the ranks, explaining to people that their challenge is to "bring me an olive"—a proposed cost-saving that will have no impact on customer quality. *Ask them to bring you savings of any size; no matter how small the saving!*

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**II. The Evidence—How it has been implemented at IHG**

An example of an IHG GM who used this tool and saved over \$36,000 annually. Here's the outcome from a GM who used the Find Me An Olive exercise to inspire people to recommend many small savings. This is extracted from the GM's report to their boss:

*"The following cost savings have been implemented or will be implemented. Our discussions have all been about cutting expenses without sacrificing service or employee morale."*

- Light Switch timers have been installed in all storage rooms, closets, and outdoor lighting. (Electricity savings and also a green initiative).
- Beverage containers bought for all employees—Styrofoam cups and plastic cups eliminated. (Paper supplies savings and also a green initiative). "Olive" savings of \$4723 YTD 2009.

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**III. The Results—What your colleagues are saying!**

A great idea!—Gary Sim, VP of Sales, Hong Kong  
Love it! Will run the exercise with my team!—Liz Getling, GM Brazil

**3**

**Hard Numbers**

Stressing proven results of implementing the tool helps leaders visualize the benefits that they will receive from replicating the exercise.

**2**

**Authentic Examples**

Highlighting real experiences with the exercise, articulated by leaders themselves, builds credibility of the tool.

**4**

**Peer Verification**

Including comments and feedback from other leaders enables leaders to gain confidence in the tool and increases likelihood of implementation.

Decorporatize the user experience by appealing to leaders' resistance to formal learning portals and lack of time.

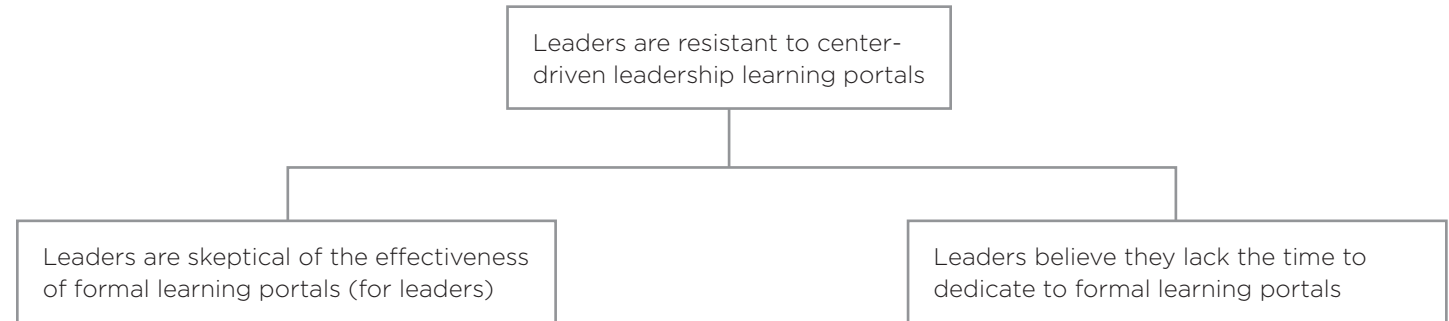
- IHGs design philosophy caters to leader preferences by ensuring the portal is truly leader-driven in appearance and usage.
- A relaxed, passive branding distinguishes it from conventional learning sites, while simple, highly relevant content ensures leaders receive immediate and quick value when they visit the portal.

 "Leaders like to learn, but they are less receptive to be 'taught,' at least in the traditional sense of the word."

Saikat Chatterjee  
HR Manager  
IHG

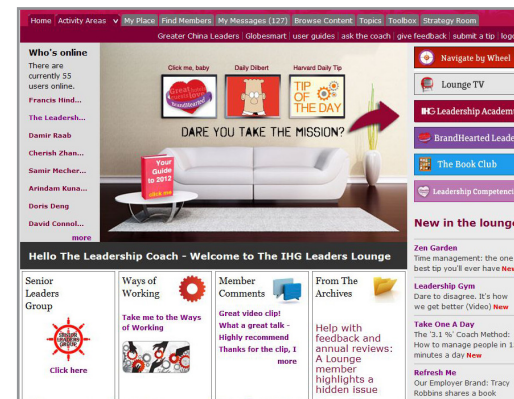
# DECORPORATIZE THE PORTAL DESIGN TO DRAW LEADERS IN AND ACTIVATE THE NETWORK

## The Problem

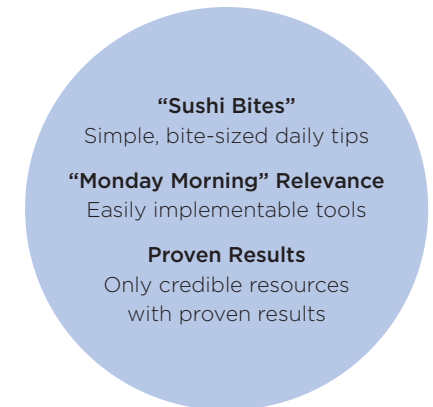


## IHGs Portal Design Considerations

### Relaxed, Network-centric Brand



### Consumable, Executive-friendly Content



The portal continues to be highly effective in driving leader productivity, supporting their execution, and enabling opportunities to share successful practices across the business.

- The number of visits to the leadership portal continues to increase each year, as does the number of tools and resources that are downloaded by leaders.
- While IHG tracks all the conventional metrics associated with online networks, they also track leader behavior on the portal. Tracking where leaders spend their time and what content they are viewing or downloading allows IHG to evolve the portal in real time to leader preferences.

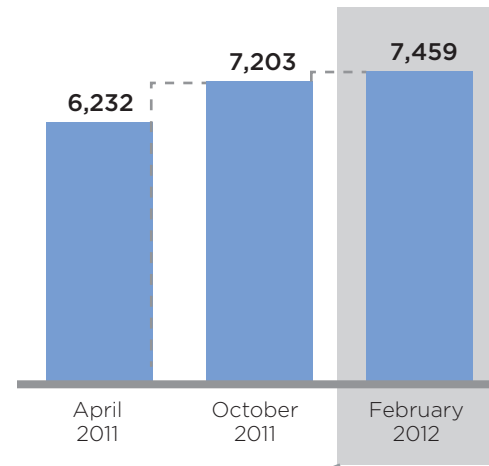


“Absolutely brilliant! I love that this tool is easily accessible with step by step instructions. Looking forward to putting it to use.”

IHG Leader

## A MORE PRODUCTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM THROUGH CHANGED BEHAVIORS

Number of Visits



Top Six Countries Monthly Visits

| Top Six Countries | Monthly Visits |
|-------------------|----------------|
| US                | 2,356 visits   |
| UK                | 1,478 visits   |
| China             | 1,317 visits   |
| Australia         | 326 visits     |
| Japan             | 243 visits     |
| Singapore         | 189 visits     |

Case-in-Point

### Situation

An IHG leader was performing annual reviews for his team and felt that he could improve the process by linking it more directly to the four components of IHG's overall strategy: Financial Returns, People, Guest Experience, and Responsible Business.

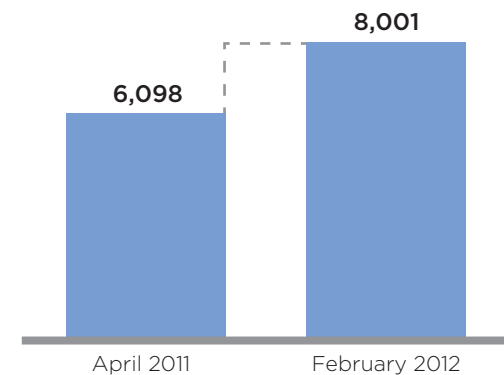
### Action

The leader developed his own tool called “The Assessment Wheel,” which proved to be very effective for him and his team. Realizing the potential value of the tool for other leaders, he shared it with The Coach, who in turn uploaded it to the portal.

### Result

The new tool was very well received by the community and was adopted globally by other leaders looking to strengthen their performance review processes.

Content Used per Week



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DECORPORATIZED  
DESIGN  
PHILOSOPHY

RESULTS



## Asia HR Executive Board

**DRAFT**

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