CENTER FOR POSITIVE LEADERSHIP
Local WorldChanger Teams
Empowering Teams by Breaking Down Barriers to Collaboration and Amplifying their Influence through Positive Leadership

The challenges of modern, complex organizations can stymie even people with the best of intentions. For example, many managers struggle to come up with remote work arrangements that benefit both the organization and its employees; reduce burnout and increase engagement among their employees; manage diversity, equity, and inclusion in effective ways; adapt to technological, economic, demographic, or social trends; develop sustainable operations; innovate; have a positive impact on local communities; rejuvenate organizational purpose and strategy; or improve the organization in other ways. One reason why managers are often stymied by these challenges is because addressing them requires them to work with people from other departments who have competing incentives, contrasting ways of understanding the problem, other relationships that take priority, personal fears that inhibit action, or other barriers to collaboration.

Even if managers succeed in collaborating with others, they still often struggle to have the impact that they desire. Teams with diverse backgrounds who learn to collaborate well can often do extraordinary things, but if the things they are trying to do require influencing others as well, then collaboration alone is insufficient. They must also learn to influence others in meaningful, powerful, and enduring ways. One of the central activities of the University of Louisville Center for Positive Leadership (CPL) is to empower teams by breaking down barriers to collaboration and amplifying their influence through positive leadership.

Enabling Teams to Change the World

We refer to cross-functional teams of people who share a common commitment to work together to improve their organizations with regards to a common issue as Local WorldChanger Teams. These teams take seriously the adage to “think globally but act locally” to make their organizations better. We empower these teams by helping them with at least six months of project design, team design, measurement, training, coaching, and accountability structures, all related to the issue around which they are trying to improve the world. The project is designed to make a measurable difference in relation to this issue, but even more importantly, the developmental process gives local participants relationships, knowledge, skills, motivation, and resources that enable them to continue to change the world after the project is over.
What are Local WorldChanger (LWC) Teams?

WorldChangers are people who are motivated to improve the world in some specific way, irrespective of positions or rewards, and who are already working to make that change. We organize Local WorldChangers into teams so that they can work on specific, concrete projects, and help them develop their abilities to practice positive leadership as they work on these projects. This approach enables us to achieve the following benefits:

- Making a specific, concrete, measurable difference with an important issue in your organization.
- Building enduring capability for addressing challenges and improving the world.
- Developing your employees’ ability to practice positive leadership.
- Accelerating and enhancing people’s impact on issues they care about through positive leadership.
- Generating new ideas for tackling issues beyond the specific project.
- Expanding your employees’ networks inside and outside your organization.
- Breaking down silos between departments.
- Giving people a framework for working together with people who approach problems differently.
- Creating ideas and relationships by learning from people who work on different issues.

Tiff Crooks
Talent Director
Louisville Athletics

“Our inclusion in the Local WorldChangers has been positive for both our larger organization and for the individuals involved. On an individual level, we’ve observed a notable increase in empowerment of the staff involved in the group. Members are feeling heard and valued on a larger organizational level, and it’s been an empowering opportunity to influence larger organizational change. On an organizational level, we’ve observed a very well-received implementation of a revamped Employee Recognition Program which has led to excitement for future recommendations and changes that will come from the WorldChangers group.”
What do LWC teams do?

LWC teams work together for six months or longer on a concrete project that improves their organization in a measurable way, and about which the members of the team are passionate. As they work on the project, the CPL supports them with their project, provides them education and development in positive leadership, provides them with networking opportunities, and provides additional tools and events for them and for the organizations or communities from which the team members come.

A Typical Timeline for a Local WorldChanger Team

A typical timeline for LWC teams is depicted in the figure above. The minimum timeline for a team is six months. The LWC process begins when the CPL begins working with a team sponsor to design the project, select measures for project success and begin data collection, identify team members, and acquire the funds to support the team as they go through the project. Team members go through the following process.

**Launch day.** Each team participates in a one-day launch event. During this event, they establish themselves as a team, receive training, and begin their projects.

**Ongoing project.** Participants are expected to work on their projects and coordinate with each other throughout their time as members of a LWC team.

**Coaching through Leadership Amplifier.** At the launch day, the team also meets their coach and begins the process of using the smartphone application, *Leadership Amplifier*. They commit to practice positive leadership at least weekly as they work on their project and receive weekly coaching from their coach and from each other.

**Tyra Family Distinguished Conversation Series.** Teams attend monthly breakfast events with other LWC teams. These events give participants the opportunity to network with people in other teams, report on their progress, receive feedback, make plans, and (in some of these events) receive training from visitors such as authors, artists, experts, and experienced professionals.
Tools and events. The CPL creates leadership tools and hosts events related to positive leadership. These events and tools will be free to LWC team members and to people from the organizations to which LWC team members belong. (They will not be free to people who are not LWC team members or their organizations.)

Post-project data collection. At the conclusion of the project, the CPL will help teams and their sponsors collect data again, so that we can assess the impact of their project.

Final report. The team concludes their project by presenting the results to their sponsor and to other interested, invited parties.

How to Create Teams

If you would like to create a team for your organization, please contact us at cpl@louisville.edu. We will help you to select and design projects, select team members, create measures to assess your issue before and after the project, and make other arrangements as appropriate.

Joanna Erny
Chief of Staff
Metro United Way

“Working with the Center for Positive Leadership’s Local WorldChangers Team Project has been incredible. The facilitation is masterful and each of our team members has learned new ways to expand leadership skills and work through challenges. If you want to learn how to make a bigger impact in your role, challenge your own perspectives, or simply get work done in a new, positive way – I can’t recommend them enough!”