



A bit of personality development

Dr Mathias Jehn leads teams at the management and subject area level in the Central Library. Almost two years ago, he completed “Compact leadership”: a conversation about challenges when it comes to leadership and the benefits of the offering.

Dr Jehn, what was the trigger for you to participate in the “Compact leadership”?

I am very interested in leadership topics, and I am keen to continue my education in this area. I am convinced that without support, it is harder to lead effectively. What's more, I had taken on a leadership role in the university library a year earlier. I had been head of the subject department before. But when managers come into their own leadership area, the result can be a different type of leadership.

Which areas of leadership are you specifically interested in?

Earlier, in the 1980s and 1990s, leadership was still different – mostly hierarchical from top to bottom. Today, leaders need to cover the entire repertoire – from delegating to coaching and advising. They

have to be familiar with a lot of leadership topics and apply them in a very situational manner. I would like to take advantage of the various possibilities and methods to behave appropriately in different leadership situations.

What is having a leadership role about?

In my experience, it is about providing a good framework in which employees can operate independently. My idea of leadership is defining this framework and shaping it together. The role of a manager is also to carry over the various interests to the next largest framework – i. e., to balance interests with the next highest level and to play a mediatory role. I see myself less as a motivator: instead I take care to break down obstacles and avoid slowing down the motivation.

What were you able to apply directly from what you learned?

I remembered the initial questions at the beginning of a round, before it went directly into the practical phase via the theoretical content. For example, the consultants asked the participants at the beginning about their best professional moment from the week prior. Through this entry point, each person is brought along, and you get into professional discussions. I've been doing that at meetings ever since. The friendly environment and the experiences of colleagues in other areas were also helpful. There are leaders with whom I still meet regularly online today, and we exchange ideas in a collegial way.

“ I find the offer as it relates to leadership development to be sustainable and I can highly recommend it. ”

Have you experienced your team differently since then?

I don't know if I can tie that to “Compact leadership”. But because I am interested in leadership as such and I deal with these issues continuously, this leadership offering has been an important building block for me. It has strengthened me a bit in my personality development and in my leadership responsibilities. I find the offer to be sustainable for the purposes of leadership development, and I can highly recommend it. You have the entire spread of the leadership palette at hand and you get friendly feedback.

What was the biggest lesson you took away?

The “Changes” module and the practical examples based on the change curve. It shows which phases people usually pass through when they are going through a change. First, they go through a so-called valley of tears. This is because a common characteristic of people is that they often do not want to change themselves. The development curve for change is almost always the same and applies to individuals as well as teams. There are certain stages that are necessary during a change, even where things are not going so smoothly. This valley has a reason and is not a bad sign. As a leader, I have to accompany the team through this mood, not prevent it.

Dr Mathias Jehn heads Conservation and Digitalisation (BuD) as well as the Archive Centre and the Frankfurt & Rare Prints Collection in the Central Library. Since 2008, he has been working for the Goethe University library.



Internal certification offering: “Compact leadership”

“Compact leadership” is a modular element of the leadership development. In a practical leadership journey with seven modules (face-to-face and online seminars), we support you in (further) developing your own leadership compass and looking at yourself and your daily leadership challenges from new perspectives and with creative solutions through professional impulses, a peer-to-peer network and personal reflection.

An overview of modules and dates can be found here: www.goethe-learn-campus.de.