

# Carrefour Strengthens Global Competitiveness with Coaching Skills Training Program

CASE STUDY



## CHALLENGE

Carrefour is the world’s second-largest retailer and the largest in Europe. The company has been a visionary industry pioneer throughout its 60+-year history. Yet, an intensely competitive and changing marketplace has introduced a set of challenges, particularly for large, global retailers:

- » Booming e-commerce sector and mounting competition from Amazon, Alibaba, and other exclusively e-commerce companies
- » Millennial-driven evolution in customer relationships and employee hiring, management, and career development
- » Increasingly dynamic, faster-paced global retail environment fueled by advances in technology, logistics, manufacturing, and sourcing

Carrefour leaders were also following a traditional, hierarchical management style that limited employee autonomy. For example, managers were often instructing employees on day-to-day job responsibilities, answering easily resolved questions, and making tactical decisions.

However, Carrefour balances traditional approaches with deeply ingrained innovation that’s allowed the company to thrive when expanding internationally. Carrefour was therefore uniquely positioned to bring the same degree of innovation and adaptability to creating a culture that better meets evolving marketplace demands.

**CLIENT:** Carrefour, a global food retailer

**LOCATION:** Headquartered in Massy, France with 12K+ stores in 30+ countries

**SIZE:** 321,000+ employees



***“We’re proud to partner with CCL to shape unique learning experiences for Carrefour leaders. This leadership program contributes to instilling a culture of coaching and feedback across our organization that is contributing to our continued innovation and success.”***

***- Adilson Borges, CLO and Carrefour University Dean, Carrefour***

## SOLUTION

Carrefour leadership realized that soliciting more employee input and achieving employee autonomy required a program – U-Leader – that would train managers and other leaders in a variety of coaching skills. These skills could then be modeled for, and passed down to, direct reports and shared throughout the company.

Carrefour selected the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) as its partner on the U-Leader program, which is part of Université Carrefour, the company’s corporate university aimed at developing talent and improving performance.

CCL applied decades of leadership-development experience and global capabilities to create and customize the program – and motivate participants to take their coaching skills in dynamic new directions. Program materials were developed in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Chinese to reach Carrefour employees across the globe.

The 4½-day U-Leader learning experience is organized as follows:

**Day 1:** Leadership-development research and assessment results are discussed among participants, who complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and a 360 assessment before attending.

**Day 2:** Coach-facilitated training begins, with large-group sessions conducted in English and small-group sessions in group members’ native language.

**Day 3:** Participants receive guidance in applying their assessment results to their coaching skills and are trained in CCL’s coaching model.

**Day 4:** Participants learn the complete coaching continuum – from short-term performance to long-term development – as well as skills for soliciting feedback from direct reports.

**Day 5 (half day):** Participants share feedback on coaching skills and work together to develop effective and detailed action plans.

After returning to work, U-Leader participants receive 2 hours of follow-up coaching from a CCL coach to address any challenges that may arise.

The U-Leader program’s customized approach was never more prominent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person training and travel were restricted worldwide – and the pivot to 100% virtual learning was launched.

The virtual program included participants from offices across the globe, and was designed around CCL’s Better Conversations Everyday (BCE) and Better Conversations and Coaching (BCC) programs that instill a culture of coaching and feedback through 4 core behaviors:

1. Listen to understand
2. Ask powerful questions
3. Challenge and support
4. Establish next steps and accountability

Through 4 virtual modules, participants received instruction and the opportunity to apply program learnings to real-life coaching situations.

## RESULTS

The U-Leader program’s combination of assessment exercises, customized training, and a team-centered environment generate exceptional results that benefit both participants and their direct reports, including:

- » Greater ability to maximize the contribution of direct reports’ ideas and feedback, and the value of those employees to the company
- » Less time spent by leaders on matters firmly within direct reports’ capabilities – and more time devoted to strategic priorities
- » Highly motivated new employees, lower turnover rates due to increased autonomy and engagement, and a robust pipeline of future leaders
- » Expanded employee mindsets and renewed openness to collaboration and change

The U-Leader coaching initiative has been regarded positively from both participants and Carrefour senior leaders. By providing managers with quality coaching skills, Carrefour has been able to instill a culture of coaching throughout the organization and ensure that ideas and feedback are shared bidirectionally, accelerating company innovation and success.

## VIRTUAL COACHING PROGRAM Participant Impact Data

Scale: 1 (strongly disagree)  
to 4 (strongly agree)

3.9

Facilitators demonstrated knowledge of the training topic

3.9

The learning exercises helped me grasp program concepts

3.7

There was a good balance between theory and practice

3.7

I learned to coach my direct reports in ways that inspire and support their ongoing development, and address tough issues when necessary

3.7

I got to know myself better, capitalize on my strengths, and engage my teams in the co-construction of an open organization

## PARTNER WITH US

CCL can work with your organization to create a customized coaching solution that will help clarify your leaders’ strengths and opportunities for development.

Learn more: [ccl.org/coaching](https://ccl.org/coaching)

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)<sup>®</sup> is a top-ranked, global, nonprofit provider of leadership development. Over the past 50 years, we’ve worked with organizations of all sizes from around the world, including more than 2/3 of the Fortune 1000. Our cutting-edge solutions are steeped in extensive research and our work with hundreds of thousands of leaders at all levels.

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