



Middle Manager Development Training: Leading Managers and Executing Strategy

12 – 23 October 2026

Amsterdam - Zuidas business district hotel



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Introduction:

Middle manager development training on leading managers and executing strategy is a ten-day course for managers who lead supervisors and team leaders, ending with a Departmental Strategy Execution Plan and a Team Leader Development Plan for a case department. Many strategies stall in the middle tier, where objectives are not cascaded, team leaders stay under-developed and lateral trade-offs are escalated rather than settled. Nominees already run sections or departments through first-line leaders, and the course is taught through case studies of contrasting departments. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this course on middle manager development.

Course Objectives:

- Redefine the middle manager's role and work values when leading through team leaders rather than leading frontline staff directly
- Translate organisational strategy into departmental objectives, key results and an operating plan using catchball dialogue and KPI trees
- Influence senior leaders and settle cross-functional trade-offs through upward briefing notes, interface agreements and negotiation grids
- Run a departmental performance and resource system with review cadences, rating calibration, decision rights and budget reallocation choices
- Lead change through the middle tier with impact assessments, communication cascades and planned difficult conversations with managers
- Build team leader capability and a leadership pipeline with talent reviews, development plans and pipeline readiness metrics

Target Audience:

- Department managers responsible for the results of several sections or teams led by supervisors
 - Section heads accountable for translating departmental targets into work plans for team leaders
 - Operations, service and support function managers who coordinate output across shifts, sites or units
 - Managers in specialist and corporate functions who lead other managers and negotiate resources with peer departments
 - Recently promoted managers of managers moving from first-line leadership into a departmental role
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Course Outline:

Day 1: The Middle Manager Role, Pressures and Work Values

- Leadership Pipeline Passage from Managing Others to Managing Managers
- Middle Manager Role Map Across Upward, Downward and Lateral Work
- Work Values and Time Allocation Audit for Managers of Managers
- Sense-Making Diary for Filtering Signals Between Levels
- Departmental Context Scan of Mandate, Capacity and Constraints

Day 2: Translating Strategy into Departmental Objectives

- Strategy Map Reading for Departmental Contribution and Priorities
- Catchball Dialogue for Negotiating Departmental Targets with Executives
- OKR Cascade from Organisational Objectives to Section Key Results
- KPI Tree Linking Departmental Measures to Team Leader Goals
- Departmental Operating Plan with Milestones, Owners and Dependencies

Day 3: Leading Through Team Leaders and Delegating at Scale

- Span of Control and Layer Review for Departmental Structure
- Team Leader Accountability Charter for Managerial Work Expectations
- Delegation Ladder Applied to Team Leaders and Section Heads
- Empowerment Boundaries Matrix for Retained, Shared and Devolved Decisions
- Skip-Level Meeting Protocol Without Undermining Team Leaders

Day 4: Managing Up and Managing Across Departments

- Senior Leader Agenda Map for Upward Influence Planning
- Upward Briefing Note Format with Options and Recommendation
- Cross-Functional Interface Agreement for Handoffs Between Departments
- Trade-Off Negotiation Grid for Competing Departmental Priorities
- Escalation Path Design for Unresolved Lateral Disputes

Day 5: Week-One Case Study on a Case Department

- Case Department Diagnostic Using the Role Map and Context Scan
 - Case Catchball Exercise Setting Targets with a Simulated Director
 - Case Delegation Redesign Across Three Team Leader Units
 - Case Upward Briefing on a Cross-Functional Resource Conflict
 - Strategy Execution Plan First Draft for the Case Department
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Day 6: Departmental Performance Systems and Resource Decisions

- Departmental Performance Review Cadence with Monthly Business Reviews
- Balanced Indicator Dashboard for Section and Team Leader Results
- Calibration Session Design for Consistent Ratings Across Team Leaders
- Departmental Budget Line Review of Headcount, Overtime and Spend
- Resource Reallocation Decision Grid for Competing Section Requests

Day 7: Decision Quality, Problem Solving and Delegated Authority Risk

- Decision Rights Register for Department, Section and Team Levels
- Problem Framing Canvas with Issue Trees and Hypotheses
- Pre-Mortem Review for Departmental Initiatives and Plans
- Delegated Authority Limits and Internal Control Checkpoints
- Decision Log and After-Action Review for Recurring Issues

Day 8: Leading Change, Communication Cascades and Difficult Conversations with Managers

- Change Impact Assessment by Section and Team Leader Group
- Resistance Diagnosis Grid for Middle-Tier and Frontline Reactions
- Communication Cascade Pack with Core Messages and Feedback Loops
- Difficult Conversation Plan for an Underperforming Team Leader
- Conflict Mediation Script Between Two Section Heads

Day 9: Leadership Pipeline, Bench Strength and Personal Resilience

- Team Leader Capability Assessment Against Managerial Work Standards
- Talent Review Grid for Bench Strength and Succession Cover
- Individual Development Plan for Emerging Section Heads
- Leadership Pipeline Metrics for Readiness, Retention and Internal Moves
- Personal Energy and Workload Plan for Sustained Managerial Resilience

Day 10: Capstone Case Study on Departmental Strategy Execution and Team Leader Development

- Case Department Objectives and KPI Cascade Finalisation
 - Case Performance Review Cadence and Resource Reallocation Choices
 - Case Change Impact and Communication Cascade Sequencing
 - Team Leader Development Plan Drafting for the Case Department
 - Strategy Execution Plan Presentation to a Simulated Executive Panel
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Strategy Cascading
- Upward Influence
- Cross-Functional Negotiation
- Delegation at Scale
- Departmental Performance Review
- Resource Allocation Judgement
- Change Communication Planning
- Leadership Bench Development

Why Attend This Course:

- Present a Departmental Strategy Execution Plan and a Team Leader Development Plan to the director or executive sponsor who owns departmental results
- Decide which decisions to retain, share or devolve to team leaders, and which section requests to fund first
- Avoid stalled initiatives, duplicated escalations and unplanned vacancies in team leader roles
- Share cascade packs, review templates and talent review grids with fellow managers to standardise practice across the department

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant gives the director or executive sponsor a Departmental Strategy Execution Plan that links organisational objectives to section key results, review cadences and resource choices, together with a Team Leader Development Plan for the people who will deliver it. Senior leaders use the plans to agree targets, delegated authority and succession cover for the department. After the first quarterly review, the department should check progress on key results, the quality of escalations reaching the manager and the readiness of the team leaders named in the plan.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before middle manager development training?

Participants should already lead supervisors or team leaders, or be about to, and know their department's targets and structure. Bringing a current organisation chart, departmental objectives and a recent performance report helps them apply the case studies to their own unit.

How does middle manager development training differ from a first-time manager course?

A first-time manager course covers the move from individual contributor to leading a team directly. Middle manager development training assumes that step is complete and focuses on leading through team leaders, cascading strategy, negotiating across departments and building the next tier of leaders.

Why does middle manager development put so much weight on strategy execution?

Middle managers sit between executives who set direction and the team leaders who organise daily work. Strategy becomes results only when they translate it into departmental objectives, allocate resources and report honest progress upward, so this tier decides whether plans are delivered or stall.

What do participants take back from middle manager development training?

Participants take back a Departmental Strategy Execution Plan and a Team Leader Development Plan for a case department, with objective cascades, review cadences, resource choices and talent review findings that can be adapted to their own department.