



Finding Joy in Management:

Building Skills, Satisfaction, & Sustained Behavior Change Through Digital Coaching

SONOS | A Sonos + Wiser Case Study



Wiser, a scalable leadership coaching platform, partnered with the visionary home audio company **Sonos**, to help their new managers find joy in their work by building the confidence and human-skills required to lead high performing teams.

Problem

Sonos needed to grow its globally distributed team quickly in order to respond to the unprecedented demand for home electronics created by the pandemic while continuing to develop innovative audio solutions and top-quality products.

As an organization devoted to developing its people, many individual contributors were promoted to management for the first time. These new managers faced an experience gap – in addition to the procedural requirements of management, their new roles called upon leveraging new 'human skills' to navigate relationships with their direct reports, their managers, and themselves. With these growing pains, combined with the complex challenges faced by Covid-19, the company saw decreased employee satisfaction and engagement.

Objective

The Sonos People Team sought to improve the management skills of new people managers across the ever-increasingly physically dispersed company to increase employee satisfaction and engagement in a scalable and sustainable manner.

Solution

To improve the people management skills at Sonos, the company partnered with Wiser to provide coaching to 77 managers around the world in 2022.

“[We were looking for a solution to build] soft skills around how to manage their direct reports and how to build relationships both with their teams and cross-functionally, how to show up with a growth mindset and from a place of inquiry, and just help bolster them in that first zero to two years of experience as a manager...”

“ **Devin Gallagher**, Program Manager People Experience / Learning & Development at Sonos

Wiser combines self-guided practice with live coaching from world-class coaches to build the leadership skills required for managers to succeed in today's complex management environment.

Wiser focuses on strengthening the human skills required for successful management and leadership under the categories of **Managing Self** (Empathy, Inner Critic, Managing Up), **Managing Others** (Delegation, Feedback, and Inquiry), and **Managing Teams** (Accountability & Growth Mindset).

Wiser's science of behavior change is simple

Each month users focus on improving one managerial skill. Going deep on one skill at a time allows users to **observe** how they show-up and what might get in the way of success and then **practice new behaviors**, which research says is how people **build new habits**.

Users spend 15-minutes each week learning a new practice, trying it out in the real world, and then reflecting on how that went. And at the end of each month they meet with a world-class coach to drive sustained behavior change.

Each Week

- Participants go through a process where they learn, practice, and reflect:
 - + Learn (A two-minute video & short reading)
 - + Practice (Commit to practicing a new behavior attached to the skill)
 - + Reflect (Pause and answer two reflection questions)

Each Month

- Participants continue the process of learning and growth through a session with a **Hudson-certified coach**

Implementation

The Wiser platform makes implementation as simple as possible. Sonos was responsible for selecting the managers who would received Wiser coaching and sending the names and email addresses to Wiser, at which point **Wiser's platform managed the process end-to-end**.

For selection, the Sonos People Team stressed the importance and uniqueness of the opportunity and invited potential participants to join the Wiser platform, and early adopters at Sonos were able to share the benefits with other managers who took advantage of the same opportunity later in the year.

Each manager registered, took a diagnostic to help identify the skills they needed to work on, were matched with a coach, and received three months of coaching. Sonos' people team was able to monitor engagement and outcomes and identify common trends around things like which key skills their managers were prioritizing.

"It's a formal learning opportunity for folks to carve out time to really dedicate to their development, [and focuses on] things that they're applying and implementing -- what they're learning and what they're reflecting on are what they are applying and integrating into their work on a day to day basis."

“ Devin Gallagher, Program Manager People Experience / Learning & Development at Sonos

Results

The cohort consisted of 77 people managers across four continents, with over 200 direct reports who would be primarily impacted by the skills and behavior changes created through the Wiser program.



- + 94% of participants remained engaged throughout the duration of the coaching journey.
- + Participants reported a 22% increase in skills (as measured by self-diagnostic).
- + Participants accomplished 83% of the business goals they set at the beginning of the engagement.
- + Wiser coaches received an average rating of 4.7 out of 5 from the participants they coached.
- + Participants gave the Wiser platform an average rating of 9.1 out of 10.



"I feel more confident as I look forward to the future by developing myself professionally and building myself up to take on other roles and responsibilities."

Colette Dohr, Internal Audit Manager at Sonos



"I've been able to find more joy in my work and find more focus."

Jenna Quirk, People Experience Program Manager at Sonos



"I always want to be learning and growing, and the Wiser program allowed me to do that but also allowed me to be a better manager day to day for my team and really create that environment for people to do the best work."

Gary Stevens, Senior Manager, Global Retail Experience at Sonos

Conclusion

Investing in the development of people management skills can have a significant impact on the success of an organization. The management development program at Sonos provided new people managers with the skills to best manage their team members, leading to improved employee satisfaction and, ultimately, increased productivity and **joy**.

Wiser is a scalable leadership coaching platform, built in partnership with the [Hudson Institute of Coaching](#), that works with global industry leaders like Accenture, Google, and Sonos to help develop world-class managers.

Sonos is a global consumer electronics company producing smart speakers and home audio systems. Founded in 2002, Sonos has approximately 1,500 employees worldwide, with its headquarters in Santa Barbara, CA, and eleven other offices spanning the globe (Australia, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

Contact us to learn more:



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