
Servant Leadership for Executives: Stewardship, Empowerment and Accountability Course

1 – 5 March 2027
Rome





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Programme Summary

Servant leadership for executives is a one-week training course for directors and senior officials at advanced level, culminating in a servant leadership practice plan for the participant's own unit. Many leadership teams endorse people-first values yet still reward control, so empowerment collapses under pressure and accountability turns into blame. The approach moves from the philosophy and measurable dimensions of servant leadership to diagnosis of current practice, then to the routines that hold service and performance together. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in servant leadership, stewardship and accountability.

The Business Case

Senior leaders set the tone for how decisions are made and how people are treated when targets are at risk. Where leaders serve the growth of their people while holding clear standards, teams take ownership and raise problems early. Where service is confused with permissiveness, performance drifts and capable staff leave.

- Discretionary Effort and Ownership: Rise as people are given authority and support to act on their own judgement.
- Retention of Capable Staff: Improves as development and recognition become routine leadership work.
- Decision Quality: Strengthens as leaders listen widely and stand back to let others contribute.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Greenleaf's Servant as Leader: Its test of whether those served grow and become more autonomous anchors Session 1.
- Spears' Ten Characteristics: Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, growth of people and building community structure the behavioural work in Sessions 1 and 3.
- Servant Leadership Survey: Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's eight dimensions provide the diagnostic profile used in Session 2.
- Stewardship: The leader's role as steward of people and resources frames the culture and decision work in Session 4.



Intended Participants

- Leaders who set direction for several teams and shape how authority is delegated.
- Executives who must raise accountability without returning to command-and-control.
- Senior officials responsible for public service culture and staff development.
- Heads of function who mentor successors and build leadership capability below them.

The programme serves government, healthcare, energy and financial services organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate their leadership practice against Greenleaf's test and Spears' ten characteristics.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose servant leadership strengths and gaps in a team using the eight Servant Leadership Survey dimensions.
3. Participants will be able to construct accountability agreements that combine empowerment with clear performance standards.
4. Participants will be able to design development conversations that build autonomy and capability in direct reports.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise changes to meetings, decisions and recognition that embed servant-led practice in culture.
6. Participants will be able to justify a servant leadership practice plan to peers and sponsors.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Servant Leadership Philosophy and Purpose

What does it mean for a senior leader to lead by serving?

- Greenleaf's Servant as Leader and the Test of Growth and Autonomy
- Spears' Ten Characteristics of the Servant Leader
- Servant Leadership Compared with Command-and-Control Leadership
- Common Misreadings: Service, Weakness and Permissiveness
- Personal Leadership Purpose Statement

Day 2: Diagnosing Servant Leadership in Practice

How servant-led is the leader and the team today?

- Servant Leadership Survey and Its Eight Dimensions
- Humility, Authenticity and Standing Back
- Courage and Interpersonal Acceptance Under Pressure
- Multi-Rater Feedback Interpretation
- Team Servant Leadership Profile



Day 3: Empowerment with Accountability

How are authority and standards held together?

- Delegating Decision Rights by Level of Authority
- Accountability Agreements and Performance Standards
- Listening, Empathy and Persuasion in Performance Conversations
- Development Conversations and Growth Plans for Direct Reports
- Addressing Underperformance Without Abandoning Service

Day 4: Stewardship, Culture and Decisions

How does servant leadership become the way the organisation works?

- Stewardship of People, Resources and Public Trust
- Foresight and Conceptualisation in Strategic Decisions
- Meeting and Decision Routines That Invite Contribution
- Recognition, Promotion and Reward Signals
- Building Community Across Functions

Day 5: Applying Servant Leadership to the Participant's Unit

Which practices will change first, and how will progress be seen?

- Action Priorities Drawn from the Session 2 Team Profile
- Accountability Agreement Draft Using Session 3 Methods
- Culture Signals Selected from Session 4 Routines
- Peer Challenge of Practice Commitments
- Servant Leadership Practice Plan Completion

Methodology

The programme combines structured self-assessment with case analysis drawn from public service, healthcare and commercial settings. Participants profile their own practice, test it against peers' observations and rehearse the difficult conversations where service and accountability meet. Each session ends with a short reflection that feeds the capstone.

- Suggested activity: Scoring a leadership team against the eight survey dimensions.
- Suggested activity: Redesigning a weekly meeting so that frontline staff shape decisions.
- Suggested activity: Holding an accountability conversation with an underperforming senior manager.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a servant leadership practice plan for their own unit. It contains a personal purpose statement, the team profile, priority behaviours, an accountability agreement template, culture signals to change and indicators for review with a sponsor after three months.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is servant leadership training suitable for experienced executives?

Yes. It is set at advanced level for directors and senior officials who already lead leaders; it assumes management experience and focuses on changing established habits rather than introducing basics.

Which models does servant leadership for executives rest on?

It rests on Greenleaf's Servant as Leader, Spears' ten characteristics of the servant leader and the eight dimensions of van Dierendonck and Nuijten's Servant Leadership Survey.

How is the servant leadership practice plan used at work?

You can use it to agree priorities with your team, brief your sponsor and review progress against the indicators you set.

How does servant leadership differ from general leadership styles courses?

It concentrates on one evidence-based approach, measured through defined dimensions, and on balancing service with accountability, rather than surveying many styles.