



Jay Mortensen with fellow associates and guests at Summit 2019

# Intentional and Purposeful: Leadership Development Training Resonates with Umpqua’s Leaders

For Jay Mortensen, Home Lending’s Director of Mortgage Loan Servicing, being a good leader starts by looking within himself—acknowledging that he’ll never be perfect, and there’s always something he could be working to improve.

Over the course of his 13+ years at the bank, that drive to refine and polish has drawn him to participate in various leadership development offerings, including most recently the Accelerate Leadership Program.

Introduced to Umpqua in 2019, Accelerate is a year-long leadership development program created to enhance leadership and business skills for future success.

Participants explore their individual leadership style in order to expand their ability to develop themselves and their teams, champion change, deepen understanding of banking operations, lead with strengths, and foster a culture of high performance.

Accelerate’s development focuses go hand in hand with Umpqua’s leadership competencies, making it a natural fit for the Bank. Our leadership competencies establish what great leadership looks like by helping to set the bar for how we should show up as leaders. They help to describe how we should act, interact, communicate, provide service, perform our job, and deliver results.





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The Accelerate program included a module by a leadership development organization that prioritizes effective communication and teaches participants to have worthwhile conversations that get to the root of the problem rather than skirt around the issue. Jay participated in the training along with more than 100 other senior leaders at the bank.

“The training on effective communication really rang true with me. I made it part of my professional development plan to make sure every associate in Home Lending had been through the program’s fundamentals which gave us the language to discuss the tough issues—to stop ignoring them, stop pretending they’d be okay,” Jay said. “It changed the whole dynamic of my leadership team.”

This ability to talk about tough topics comes in handy both in Jay’s day-to-day work and in his role as the executive sponsor of Umpqua’s Pride Associate Resource Group. In Home Lending, Jay and his team often work with challenged borrowers, and the ability to talk plainly allows them to look past surface-level problems and confront the underlying issues the borrower might be facing. For the Pride ARG, this insight informs Jay’s approach to structural policy changes.

“Pride ARG members are passionate—they want to be out there carrying signs, visibly fighting for change,” Jay said. “I tell them to keep the passion, but it’s important to be strategic. Umpqua is maturing in our diversity efforts, and if we’re intentional and purposeful, we can make a bigger impact.”

The program also inspired Jay to rethink his relationship with other leaders at the Bank, focusing on the collaboration and effective communication leadership competencies. He started scheduling weekly 1:1s with them to check in and see what was going on in their worlds.

As for his own team, Jay made it a point to visit members of his team in their own spaces, dropping by their offices or desks to say hello and learn what was happening in their lives.



Jay accepting the Leadership Award

“I make it a point to remember something unique about them, whether it’s that they have five cats or that they’re caring for their mother at home,” Jay said. “When people connect with you on that level, there’s a sense of trust and leadership, and they want to work for you. People don’t necessarily work for an organization—I think people work for other people. And an organization has to have a culture that allows that to happen.”

By embracing Umpqua’s leadership competencies and applying what he learned in the Accelerate program, Jay has helped bring the Bank’s culture of leadership to life. In doing so, not only has he established a strong network of fellow leaders, he has also created an environment where everyone on his team understands the value of showing up as a leader for themselves and others.