

Design of complex leadership development programs

# Leadership Development with PepsiAmericas

The impact of the economic crisis forces companies to minimize their costs and to allocate internal resources even in such projects where they previously applied external knowledge and expertise. This phenomenon, unfortunately, occurs also in our projects. We have experienced a distinct shift in our role in the leadership development projects: Our clients are more and more ready and open to run projects jointly with internal and external specialists designing and/or delivering certain leadership development programs together with “insiders” from the organization. The extent of contribution from external consultants and internal specialists varies from company to company.

In this article we will present a specific case with our long-term client, PepsiAmericas<sup>1</sup>: the implementation of a regional Leadership Development program in Romania (the program was set up in 2003, and carried out in 2009).

## Leadership Academy by PepsiAmericas CEG<sup>2</sup>

In 2003 PepsiAmericas CEG decided to set up and run a Leadership Academy for the Central European region. The program originally consisted of three modules: Leadership Skills, Finance/Business Understanding and HR for line managers. Each of the three modules was planned to be delivered in three different levels: for frontline leaders, for senior managers and for executives.

The modules were jointly developed by a team of external and internal consultants from different countries of

Due to the economic crisis companies tend to mobilize as many internal resources as they can both in the design and the delivery of their leadership development programs. Where and how can the involvement of consultants represent added value to the success of leadership development programs?



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the region. We were involved in developing and delivering the Leadership Skills module as well as in the Train-the-Internal-Trainers course. We developed the leadership module in close cooperation with specialists from the regional center.

Following the Train-the-Trainer course the program was introduced first in Hungary and then rolled out in the whole CEE region: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and more recently Romania. Originally this module was carried out by an external

and an internal trainer in every country.

The finance and business understanding module (covering basic knowledge of the company’s functional areas: sales, marketing, finance, supply chain and operation) and the HR module (including HR systems, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits etc.) was implemented by internal specialists.

Minor changes were made in the delivery of the leadership skills programs (2006): the target audience was extended to lower level leaders (supervisors, team-leaders); and due to the lack of internal resources the leadership programs were delivered exclusively by external trainers.

## Leadership Academy by QAB Romania<sup>3</sup> 2009-2010

In 2009, in the middle of the economic crisis, PepsiAmericas decided to set up a Leadership Academy in Romania. We were requested to support the Romanian company in the completion of the first two modules: Leadership and Business Understanding. From previous cooperation we were able to bring a wealth of experience to our partner. However, the Leadership Academy in Romania was implemented slightly differently. The program was of high importance: there was an essential need for a common leadership culture, for leadership development and for enhanced cross-functional cooperation.

The Leadership modules and the Business Understanding module were implemented in 2009. Due to unri-



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Close cooperation of internal and external trainers makes leadership development programs successful.

valued experience in program design and development as well as the capability of delivering the programs in Romania, ICG became an external partner in the implementation of the Academy.

The Business Understanding modules were delivered by internal experts. We were requested to support them both in the customization as well as in the delivery preparation of the business understanding module.

The preparatory work consisted of the following components: a two and two day long Train-the-Trainer course for internal trainers of the Business Understanding module; a pilot program, based upon the leadership skills development program, aimed at the top management; adaptation of training materials and supports for the HR in doing the internal preparatory work.

Together with our HR partner we decided to organize a kickoff and a Q&A session with the participation of a member from the leadership team. These program components have contributed effectively to the development of a consistent leadership culture.

Following the Train-the-Trainer courses we provided the internal trainers with individual coaching and team

coaching until they completed the delivery of their first two modules.

We ran two types of the Leadership module for the frontline leaders and for the senior leaders (involving no internal trainer). Within six months we have completed all the preparatory work and we delivered leadership skill development for 17 groups of participants.

Based upon our considerable experience from previous programs we were requested to design and organize follow up meetings. These meetings were designed and aimed to help refresh the knowledge and skills from the trainings, and to support participants to overcome the first difficulties while applying what they have learnt during the training programs. The follow up sessions ended in March 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> PepsiAmericas was acquired by Pepsico in 2009

<sup>2</sup> PepsiAmericas Central European Group

<sup>3</sup> Quadrant Amroq Beverages was the legal entity of PepsiAmericas in Romania. QAB started the bottling of Pepsi products and it was acquired by Pepsi Americas in 2007

## Conclusions

### Key Factors for Successful Leadership Programs

**B**ased upon our considerable experience having gained from designing and delivering these programs we can highlight a series of learning points and critical factors that made the design and implementations of complex leadership development programs successful.

#### Co-work with the HR partner

We had a trustful partnership with HR leaders where we could ideally combine our knowledge and expertise with their knowledge of the company.

#### Involvement of the senior management

The kickoff and Q&A sessions with management team members powerfully reinforced the main messages of the trainings, and greatly facilitated cross-hierarchical communications.

#### Internal and external trainers

The balance between internal and external trainers contributed to the success of the Academy. Each of the trainers delivered a content in which he/she could feel entirely comfortable and maintain personal and professional integrity.

#### Follow up of the programs

The follow up sessions facilitated the application of the skills that had been acquired during the trainings.

#### Support for the internal trainers

It turned out to be essential to provide internal trainers with sufficient support. In case of PepsiAmericas internal trainers received methodological and project management support. It is also critical that internal trainers receive enough time to prepare for the trainings.

Under these circumstances chances are good to complete successful programs.