

**DL+**

**IMPACT STORIES**



# **MAKING LEADERS**

**A CUSTOM CASE STUDY WITH CAPGEMINI FRANCE  
AND EMLYON BUSINESS SCHOOL**

# How emlyon business school designed a program for Capgemini to cope with new demands not just from its clients but also its own people.

## **Finding a dancing partner to jointly design an innovative leadership intervention**

The explosion of confusion around how organizations manage digital transformation has been a rich seam for global consulting firms. In 2017 the consultancy research site, consultancy.org, reckoned that it accounted for over \$23 billion of consultancy business, and that figure will only have increased since then. It is therefore little surprise that this year another site, consultancy.com, has ranked Accenture and Capgemini as the number one and two consultancies by revenue – as both have grown from having deep technology expertise roots.

With its origins from over 50 years ago as a consulting and IT services company, Capgemini now employs over 200,000 people worldwide. In France it employs 25,000 staff with its principle focus still firmly on IT consulting, outsourcing and services. In the course of 2018, a global strategic shift was afoot at Capgemini, the LEAD program. This major organizational transformation, which is still ongoing, has been designed to leverage the Group's global reach and cross-functional potential to bring more simplicity to clients, as well as increased responsiveness and enhanced overall experience.

**By Roddy Millar**

WE ARE POSITIVELY  
CHALLENGED BY OUR  
EMPLOYEES AND OUR  
MANAGERS TO GROW, TO  
DEVELOP OURSELVES



**THE ABILITY OF THEIR MANAGERS  
TO BE SUCCESSFUL LEADERS...  
WILL BE THE TRUE MEASURE  
OF SUCCESS**



Around mid-2018, while LEAD was beginning to make its appearance in internal presentations and memos, the new Managing Director for Capgemini France, Jérôme Siméon, took over, and started breathing new life in the organization by aligning business units across the country more closely in terms of process and approach. The development of the Group has been forged on strong decentralization principles and an empowerment culture. Jérôme Siméon's rollout of LEAD in France was therefore also designed to break the historical silos which this culture has created. As with all such major change initiatives, an evolution in team management and leadership was felt critical to the success of LEAD, and its business and operational objectives, analyzed Delphine Renard, the Deputy HR Director with Capgemini France.

At about the same time, Franck Baillet, having spent his career as a consultant, became EVP for Learning & Development at Capgemini France, and he was very much aware of the new environment the consultants were having to operate in. As he remarks "we now have to cope with different types of demand, not only from our clients but also from our consultants, from our people. We recruit a lot of people every year. In France, it's more than 4,000 people across our different businesses." A significant part of these new recruits are millennials, with their different aspirations and expectations of work, to add to the changing demands being experienced within the organization.

Franck Baillet considered that Capgemini France *"had to do something to better equip our managers to help them face these challenges and to inspire the younger staff, showing them that this is a company where we have a lot of freedom to do things and that we are positively challenged by our employees and our managers to grow, to develop ourselves."* Capgemini Group already had a Leadership Model in place, but, as Franck notes, some of its six elements were not as well observed as one might wish they were. Particularly the 'people developer', 'agile player' and 'active connector' dimensions, which could easily get pushed to the side in the race to deliver for clients, rather than the other three more business focused elements, and he started to plan a leadership development program both to support LEAD and to address these human capital aspects. At this juncture, Franck found a match in Delphine Renard, both sharing an ambitious vision and an unwavering commitment to developing managers and strengthening a leadership culture suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The core team was in place.

From the outset, Franck was clear that having an external provider, ideally with brand prominence, would be necessary to engage and retain the consultants in the face of the pressure to generate fees and deliver for clients. He convened a steering committee of HR Directors and Business Unit leaders from the different entities across

France, and they ran a competitive two-round contest between leading French business schools, where emlyon business school emerged as the clear winner. Franck was keen that the business school provider would be a collaborative partner in the process, and thus emlyon business school was selected owing to its ability to jointly create and co-design the emergent program structure, with just the right blend of academic content and on-the-job practice key for impact.

### **Building of team of chefs to cook up an effective and palatable L&D experience**

Custom Training Solutions manager at emlyon business school, Thomas Misslin, was the initial point of contact at the school and became a key player in the evolution of the resulting 'Making Leaders' program. The program's name, merging as it does the 'Leader for Leaders' motto prevalent at Capgemini and emlyon's tagline 'Early Maker' is tinged with a little irony, as the central tenet of the program is not that leaders are 'made' but rather that they are 'grown'. With this latter metaphor, leadership is seen as a journey of evolution rather than a process of construction.

Thomas avers: *"It's like growing a plant. You water it, you wait for the sun to rise. Patience becomes a virtue. You add some fertiliser. You pray, you hope, whatever it takes. And then things get going. All of this really is anchored in McGregor's Theory Y of human development which he described in detail in his seminal 1960 work The Human Side of Enterprise."* Almost from the get-go, the program's steering committee was on the same page with this philosophy, and so the design of the program took shape smoothly.

Early on, Thomas brought in Claire Moreau, a coach and affiliate professor with emlyon business school, to help design, build a team for and run the program with him. Claire's objective was "to get the participants to 'experience' more than 'learn' (read 'pile up knowledge') in the program, which she describes as being the 'DNA' of the team's pedagogic approach, drawn from the practice of Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, combined with a dose of Seligman's positive psychology and David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry method.

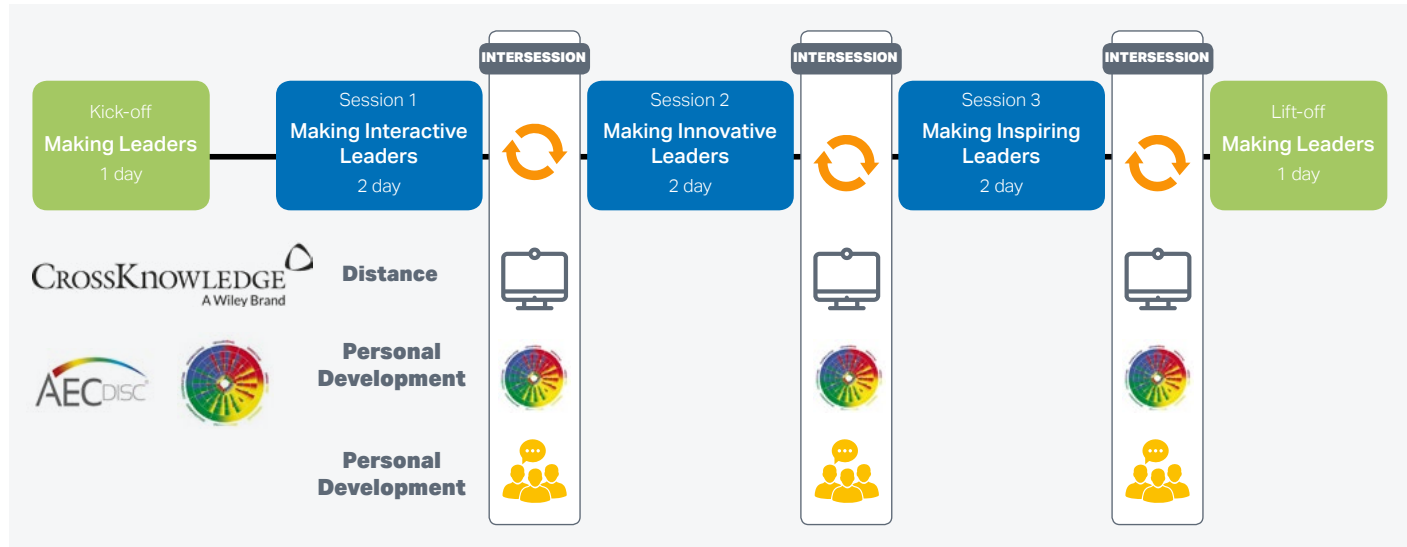


A CENTRAL PILLAR OF THE PROGRAM WAS FOR PARTICIPANTS, MANY WHO HAD GROWN UP WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY HAD TO FULLY UNDERSTAND AN ISSUE TO CRACK IT, TO BE ABLE TO COPE WITH INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND 'VUCA' CONTEXTS.

Never be  
afraid to  
reinvent  
yourself.







### Using alchemy to offer up a transformative elixir

The classic academic 'sage on the stage' imparting wisdom to eager listeners was not going to work; most of the program participants were experienced consultants with deep technical knowledge in their own areas, and often leading large teams already – not only would such a hierarchical structure not engage them, it was also counter to the message the program was trying to convey and embody. In its place, all on the committee looked to a much more collaborative methodology in the program, a 'guide by the side' type of approach.

Ultimately, the following ingredients were felt to have contributed usefully, and sometimes materially, to the impact the program ultimately delivered:

- **Experiencing first;** learning (consciously) second
- **Program ownership** by participants
- **Modelling the way** to capitalize on participants' implicit learning
- **Top-level commitment** at Capgemini France
- **Being true to the 70-20-10 model** for designing the intervention

### Making Interactive, Innovative, and Inspiring Leaders

A central pillar of the program was for participants, many who had grown up with the assumption that they had to fully understand an issue to crack it – a foundation of their consultants thinking – to be able to cope with increasing complexity and 'VUCA' contexts. *"We wanted them to feel that had they had the ability to address uncertainty with*

***An alliance of strengths to make an impact***



*their team whom they could trust to get the better of it"* says Claire Moreau. In the end, the program focused on three leadership qualities that would enable participants to come out on top of VUCA; and Making Leaders came to mean Making *Interactive* Leaders, Making *Innovative* Leaders and Making *Inspiring* Leaders. This easy to grasp framework became a rallying cry of sorts when **low-tech high-touch experiential workshops** took participants a tad too far out of their comfort zone. The very simplicity of this model also helped managers keep it front and centre in the midst of their dizzying and demanding schedules.

The 2018-19 class was made up of thirteen cohorts of ten managers; and within that they **self-organized** by electing thirteen representatives who got together outside of the regular program schedule to jointly design Action Tips (or CAPtitudes, as they chose to call them)

that detail, in practical ways, what it means to be a leader at Capgemini in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in line with the Group's Leadership Model. In this way, the management of the program subtly shifts from the business school training staff to the participants as the program progresses over its 10 month duration. The emlyon business school team describes *"this dual approach – inputs & practice on the one hand, and actual productive work on leadership on the other – finds itself woven into the program, whereby the group as a whole, the class, has the responsibility for jointly producing something useful and relevant out of this program; something which is decidedly theirs. They get to actually get work done, together, putting to immediate use the learning gained in the program. At the end, they feel as if the program is theirs... which, funnily enough, becomes true because of that feeling."*



WE GET FEEDBACK FROM HR  
DIRECTORS TELLING US,  
'YOU KNOW WHAT? WE'RE  
GOING BEYOND WHAT  
WE EXPECTED WITH  
THIS PROGRAM.'



Claire Moreau, the program director concurs “beyond training participants, an important and needed contribution to be sure, we’re creating the conditions so that managers get truly interested and start learning of their own volition, practising with their teams, and so on. In this way, they take on responsibility for their own learning. During the final day of the program, they jointly certify themselves as leaders... so letting the managers themselves recognise other leaders in their midst and how much they’ve changed in the program. There’s this spirit of it being jointly designed. You fully participate. You can’t sit back and wait for knowledge to come. You have to do something, to be a fully-fledged actor. You have to take chances. In short, I think we ‘teach’ them to be leaders by *being* leaders, by constantly placing them in situations to act the part: they are leaders already and we take it as a starting point, not as an end-state result. And that makes a big difference.”

Far from making life easy for the emlyon business school program manager, this **‘hands off’ approach to guiding the program** is a real challenge: “There is more tension at our end because important parts in the program are not

scripted.” When things are scripted, the trainers are in control, delivering their presentations and running well-formatted workshop activities, but when they stand-back and let participants engage and evolve the pace and direction of the program, they need to be much more attentive and responsive. And surprises abound.

With this approach, the program becomes to some extent a journey of ‘unknown unknowns’ for the program designers as well. But for Thomas Misslin this is another ‘secret ingredient in the recipe’ that creates the space for change in participants to take place. “They come up with things that you had no idea they might come up with. And then we get feedback from HR Directors telling us, ‘You know what? We’re going beyond what we expected with this program.’ In a way, this is a telling sign of an intervention’s success. Managers have to surprise us. If we see ourselves as all-knowing teachers, the magic cannot happen” he says. “We need to create a VUCA environment so that we might all learn how to deal with it... together. Somehow we put ourselves in the same boat with the participants.”

Another key factor behind the program's success was **Capgemini's buy-in**: senior business leaders did create the conditions for it to work, both by contributing their time in the steering committee and by sharing honestly with participants. When senior leaders are open and honest with their managers about their own leadership journey, bumpy as it sometimes is, this sets the tone for others to similarly be honest about theirs. "We can't force people to say things, to make admissions... but our job is to create the opportunity, and sometimes a powerful yet simple question is enough. And when the CEO opens up, of course this allows others to share their personal fears and vulnerabilities." This genuine commitment, quite aside from the traditional communication package, is critical to such an ambitious program's success. Thomas observes that "our contribution is just one ingredient among others that have to be there..., if you take away some of those ingredients, the dish will taste different... will be less spicy, less memorable!"

It sometimes seems puzzling why companies would not push L&D partners to be more involved in the 70 part of the 70:20:10 model of learning and development; from the start this was not the case with Capgemini. The program needed to reach into the everyday work practices of the participants

so as to ensure that the habits and behaviours were truly adopted. What perhaps was most radical about the design was that the team behind Making Leaders deliberately tried to apportion energy and resources on the basis of the **70:20:10 model**. In other words, a relatively smaller weight was given to the traditional 'knowledge exchange', the 10 element, a fair chunk of effort went to support the 20 element, informal learning, and relatively greater attention was given to the 70 element. Making Leaders did not quite achieve that ratio, but ultimately, the impact all concerned felt at the end of the program was reward enough for genuinely trying to.

For Capgemini, the client, the ability of their managers to be successful leaders, handling the chaos and uncertainty that digital change is bringing to their clients and within their own business, will be the true measure of success. Given the change in behaviours and confidence in handling and leading in ambiguity that the program has produced so far, this is already happening.... And a second wave of the program is in the pipeline, Franck Baillet says. No doubt it will have a few surprises in store for the project team. Everyone's out in the garden tending already blooming flowers and planting seeds for the future.

**“EMLYON’S CONTRIBUTION IS  
JUST ONE INGREDIENT AMONG  
OTHERS THAT HAVE TO BE THERE...,  
IF YOU TAKE AWAY SOME  
OF THOSE INGREDIENTS, THE DISH WILL  
TASTE DIFFERENT... WILL BE LESS  
SPICY, LESS MEMORABLE!”**





## About **emlyon business school**

emlyon business school is devoted to lifelong learning for entrepreneurial and international management. For over 30 years, it has developed its executive education activity to support companies in their transformation. emlyon business school designs and deploys innovative programmes for leaders and managers to meet the needs of companies in France and internationally.

[executive.em-lyon.com/en/Custom-programmes](http://executive.em-lyon.com/en/Custom-programmes)

**Developing Leaders** looks at the critical confluence between the provision of executive education and the real everyday needs of organizations to strengthen their management teams, their corporate performance, and their leadership.

DL+ are case studies with a difference. Combining technical methodology with a newsroom sensibility for storytelling. Getting to the heart of the best custom executive programs in the world.

Published by IEDP | [www.iedp.com](http://www.iedp.com)

