



LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE IN EMERGING MARKETS

INTRODUCTION

Leadership throughout the world is in a state of crisis. Not only are many leaders failing to deliver on their promises, but there is a lack of understanding of what leadership is, of what leaders should DO and what competencies and characteristics they should possess. Is the heroic leader who sits on the “top” of an organisation, pre-occupied with making grand strategic statements and abstract performance standards while their subordinates are supposed to implement, an effective model? Emphatically not. This is “leadership” disconnected from what it is supposed to be about. It is illegitimate leadership.

Leaders must have a compelling strategy and they must be directly involved in its implementation. They must inspire management teams at all levels to follow the strategy and provided systems and processes to ensure successful implementation. That is, leaders must be able to get others to follow their lead and leadership has to be played within an organisational context where strategy is defined at the top, following consultation with subordinates, and then cascaded through effectively-run management teams and through well-managed cross-functional teams focusing on the organisations key business processes.

There is also considerable confusion over how leaders are developed. We do not subscribe to the view that leaders are born or the myth that leadership can be taught in a classroom via a “leadership toolkit”, presented in programmes lasting for a week or so. However, leadership can be LEARNED within an organisational context designed to create challenges which force people out of their comfort zones into an environment where individuals are prepared to learn from their mistakes and successes and where their behaviour, prejudices and values are challenged.

Faculty of ICOM have conducted 65 leadership programmes all over the world over the past 20 years. These, in-company, customised action learning programmes have been developed in partnership with major organisations in the private and public sectors. We have achieved breakthroughs in improving organisational and individual performance through project-driven workplace learning techniques, where the job is the laboratory of learning NOT the classroom and where learning comes from “engagement”, from taking action in solving real business problems and reflecting on the experiences achieved. This is not to discount the classroom, where customised new knowledge is imparted with the primary aim of transferring this knowledge to the workplace.

The key factor in doing this successfully has been the faculty’s ability to work in close partnership with our clients, to understand their business issues, the national cultures in which they operate and what managers at all levels need to do to be successful. Armed with this understanding, faculty then use their experience in crafting programmes with design characteristics which facilitate the development of leadership skills which are used to improve the effectiveness of the organisation during the programme.

This in-company, action learning, collaborative and customised approved delivered by faculty who have been both successful managers and experienced “teachers” is what differentiates the Academy from its competitors. What also differentiates us is the track-record of the faculty. No other institution can claim to have done as many in-company programmes in as many countries and cultures as we have.



Programmes for Senior Executives

The pinnacle of “bespoke”, in-company, development programmes is to work with the top management teams of organisations. That is, to do programmes with “natural working groups” that are the executive committees of organisations. We have done this with several organisations, such as Almond Resorts, one of the Caribbean’s leading hotel chains. This was a two-year, part-time, action learning MBA programme that began with group projects focusing on developing a business strategy and a process for its implementation. Every individual on the Executive Committee also did an individual project, which began with defining their directorate strategy that had to be aligned with the corporate strategy. They then had to diagnose the capability of their directorates to implement their strategies and to develop business improvement plans (BIP) to implement these strategic statements. Clearly these directorate BIPs had to be devised in consultation with departmental managers in each directorate. In this way the corporate strategy was cascaded into all levels in the organisation, by individuals developing their leadership skills through their experiences in implementing their BIP and through their personal development plans.

The success of this programme was judged using business performance measures. The two hotels in the chain, when the programme started, improved their profitability which enabled them to expand and take over 3 other hotels in the region. The level of customer satisfaction improved, which led to an increase in repeat guests and a consolidation of the brand and their “laid back luxury” approach to the all-inclusive concept. Another feature was the significant improvement in cross-department integration and the positive impact of a total quality initiative which developed out of the programme.

This experience with Almond and other hotels in Barbados has laid the foundations for the Academy to offer programmes within the hospitality sector.

Middle Manager Leadership – The National Training Award

Programmes aimed at developing leadership competencies of middle manager and improving departmental performances were delivered by faculty of the Academy in Shell, Cummins, Swan Hunter, Jones Lang Lasalle, British Aerospace and the two largest companies in Barbados, namely Goddards and Barbados Shipping and Trading. The programme in Shell won the UK’s National Training Award. It was aimed, in particular, at integrating the support functions which had been transferred from London into the two manufacturing plants in the North West Region of the UK. Over several programmes 68 managers had their leadership skills developed. Senior managers claimed over £1m contribution to the bottom line was made as a result of improvements proposed and implemented by participants. As a result of this success the programme was taken to Shell Brunei, where faculty of the Academy ran the programme for 4 years. Here it developed the leadership competencies of “Malay” managers, who’s management style had not been assertive enough prior to their involvement on the programme.

First Line Leadership

At the other end of the organisational hierarchy, several programmes have been run with “supervisors”, aimed at developing their leadership competencies so they could play the roles of first line managers. One such programme was run for Swan Hunter, one of the UK’s former leading shipbuilders, where supervisors were simply progress chasers, unable to manage the workplace. An action learning programme led to a re-structuring of the role of supervisor, to the selection of those able to play the role of first line manager and to the development of these individuals as leaders of “shop floor” teams. Over the months following the programme, senior managers observed a significant improvement in labour productivity as a result of superior management of the workplace, which was achieved without any form of industrial action.



THE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

This is an alliance ICOM and organisations in the private and public sectors of countries whose economies have, or are in the process of emerging, into the global economy. ICOM is committed to creating a CRITICAL MASS of leaders able to deliver a “renaissance” in performance in their organisations and in the economies of specific countries in the developing world. The renaissance was a time of radical change, creativity and insight. Today’s globalisation of markets and technologies requires similar responses from individuals and organisations with an emphasis on innovative LEADERSHIP and the creation of organisational excellence.

The Leadership and Organisational Excellence Programme

This is the title of ICOM’s flagship programme, which will form the foundation of the LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE. It is based on the faculty’s experience of delivering 65 similar programmes world-wide. It will be a 12-month, part-time programme delivered in specific countries and could be launched in conjunction with a conference such as an Infrastructure & Investment Forums. For those who wish it can lead to an MBA, MSc, Diploma or a Certificate in International Management, awarded by Royal Holloway University of London.

What differentiates this programme for the competition is the emphasis on achieving measurable output through solving real issues of importance to participants and their organisations, via the group and individual projects. The objectives of the programme are not just to increase individual knowledge and management competence. The will have an enduring IMPACT on the organisations involved through devising new working practices and processes, revised organisational structures and the development of a “critical mass” of leader/managers. These leader/managers will become task-drivers and people-management process specialists who infuse the organisation with a renewed purpose and develop a learning climate and culture which prepares the organisation for the challenges of the future.

The programme will be an exciting journey for participants and their organisations. This journey begins with a meeting between ICOM and directors of client organisations. Together they define the client’s needs, the business deliverables of the programme and the strategic and operational issues being faced by the client. Client directors will identify problems they want the group project teams to tackle and discuss the content of their individual contributions to the programme. The Programme Director will then spend time meeting the participants and collecting data about the organisation and its performance. Participants take part in this activity by developing an audit of the performance of their departments, its strategy and how this is implemented, including the cross-boundary issues being faced.

A key theme of the programme is that leadership should be developed within an organisational context, where directors are seeking to develop excellence in all they do. We believe that the critical step towards organisational excellence is achieved when the executive committee of leader/managers cascade their business strategy into the whole organisation. This is one of any organisation’s key business processes. This can be done by leader/managers at all levels orchestrating the technical and people management issues in an integrated, value creating way. That is, effective leaders are the “life force” of any organisation. They have to be present at all levels in the organisation and resources must be allocated to develop them. This programme, which will be customised to the needs of each country and each client organisation, will contribute to the development of a “talent pool” of effective leaders. This “critical mass” or pool of leaders will drive the business strategy down into all the operational levels of the organisation, where staff focus on delivering excellent service to the customers.

We believe it is possible to give managers leadership skills within a 12-month programme which creates a learning environment that focuses on solving real organisational problems and on improving personal competence via individuals reflecting on their performance. The development of leaders has little to do with learning a set of theoretical principles in a classroom where management specialists, many of who have never been managers, sprinkle the holy water of abstract leadership on people they meet for a few days. These programmes disconnect learning from the reality of the workplace. Our action learning programmes focus on connecting the learning to the real world of improving the performance of participants own organisations and learning about personal strengths and weaknesses via reflecting on the experiences of making changes in working practices “on the job”.

Programme Design

The aim of the programme is to facilitate the creation of an Alliance between private and public sector organisations in a particular country and ICOM and its stakeholders. This process could begin with participants attending a two-day forum. Participants would then take part in the 3-day start-up module of a 12-month, part-time, modular, action learning programme. This 5-day activity could be taken as a stand-alone programme or it could be the first of 4 workshops run over the 12-month period of the programme proper. In the 12-month programme each module will last 5 days, the first 3 days of which will be a formal workshop followed by 2 days working on group and individual project sand taking part in one of the cornerstones of the programme, namely TUTORIALS conducted in small groups and one-on-one sessions with the Programme Director. The 12-month programme can be run as a consortium programme, with participants from several organisations and/or as an open programme with single individuals from a larger number of organisations. It can also be run for a single organisation, where they provide all 20/25 participants.

The programme will be made up of the following key elements:

- Ø **INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS** where participants define what they have to do to improve the performance of their part of the organisation that they control. That is, they create and implement a business improvement plan (BIP) during which they are taught to benchmark their departments against best international practice and identify changes in performance which need to be made. They are also taught how to reflect on and learn from their experiences of making the necessary changes in working practices and about team and individual behaviour. Emphasis is placed on how effectively the participants manage their own managerial teams, in both the “technical” and people management senses. Participants are given a model of best practice to refer to and each project is supervised by the Programme Director.
- Ø The cohort of say 20/25 participants are divided up into small groups and given a **GROUP PROJECT** to do during the 12 months. The topics are chosen by directors of participating organisations, guided by the Programme Director. They are usually subjects of strategic significance to the organisation and the country and frequently deal with cross-boundary issues. These group meetings feature profound conversations between individuals facing similar challenges as a group of strangers weld themselves into a cohesive, high-performing team, where life-long friendships are formed.
- Ø Each participant will do a **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)** during the programme, aimed at removing their managerial weaknesses and improving their leadership performance and giving them the confidence to engage in “courageous conversations” where they sensitively challenge the status quo. Since self-management lies at the heart of effective management development, participants are given the primary responsibility for assessing their own development needs, for setting their learning objectives and, with the help of the Programme Director, planning ways of meeting their objectives. The self-director learning process can lead to the release of latent energy and high levels of commitment to the learning process.

- ∅ WORKSHOPS customised to the needs of the participants, but covering theory and best practice in functional areas of management, to give participants a conceptual basis to help them understand the latest developments in global business and their decision-making in their own organisations. The characteristics of excellent organisations are defined and applied to the “country conditions”. What excellent leaders DO and what their personal characteristics are is also featured within an overall theme of how VALUE is best created for stakeholders. Within these workshops, tuition will be given in specific leadership skills, which are developed in the group project meetings, when the Programme Director is present and in the tutorials. Directors of other organisations recognised as business leaders are also involve din presenting the workshops as “expert witnesses”.
- ∅ A CONSULTANCY IN LEADERSHIP activity. This is a real-life, in-company, leadership intervention, where 4/5 participants spend 2/3 days in an organisation looking at specific issues of leadership. This is done within group project teams, towards the end of the programme and acts as in integrator for the whole programme and a vehicle to define action plans for the future.
- ∅ LEADERSHIP EXCHANGES where participants spend time in each others’ organisations and assess the leadership and strategic issues in an organisation other then their own. The idea here is that individuals are outside their “comfort zones”, where their understanding of key issues is “stretched”. This can be done several times if participants wish to share the experiences of their organisation in developing leaders and executing leadership.

The “magic” of these programmes is in the design and how the Programme Director weaves the above elements together and how they engage the participants in the process of learning WHILE taking action. This process starts the journey to developing the leadership characteristics which enable individuals to focus on DOING the “right things, rather than just talking about the need for change.

Organisations need a cadre of “managerial leaders” with strategic, innovative, conceptual, operational and people management skills. However, these generic management skills are not sufficient in today’s ruthlessly competitive world. They have to be put within a specific organisational context and individuals have to know how to adapt generic skills to particular situations. This programme will focus on developing skills tailored to the needs of specific countries and participating organisations and it will have, as its primary aims, to achieve:

- ∅ Measurable improvements in organisational performance achieved through the individual and group projects; and
- ∅ Noticeable improvements in individual leadership performance achieved through the PDPs and activities involved in the group and individual projects and the workshops.

Who should join the Alliance?

ICOM will invite a number of organisations in each country they operate in to join with them on this journey towards organisational excellence and strategic leadership. Participating organisations will choose one or several of their senior managers to take part in the programme. Those organisations who join the Alliance will:

- ∅ Be committed to developing their directors as leaders and supporting them in creating and implementing assertive business strategies, which will lead to the creation of additional wealth and job opportunities in the country concerned.



- ∅ Recognise the limitations of traditional training programmes and the unique opportunities created by this action learning approach.
- ∅ Recognise the benefits of customising best international practice to their particular situation and of learning with people from different business cultures.
- ∅ Be prepared to share their experiences with other members of the Alliance in order to prosper in rapidly changing national and global environments.
- ∅ Be committed to playing key roles in developing the private sector into an effective engine of growth for the national economy

Accreditation

The above programme carries accreditation from Royal Holloway University of London, part of one of the World's leading universities. For those who wish to do the qualification it will lead to either a Certificate in International Management which can lead to credits for the MBA or MSc programmes in International Management or a stand-alone Diploma in Management, also from London University and examined by London School of Economics.

Faculty of the Academy have been involved in designing and delivering 38 such accredited programmes, which led to Certificate, Doctoral and Masters level qualifications, awarded by the universities of Oxford (UODLE), Cambridge (UCLES) and Bradford. For example, they designed and delivered one of the UK's first Doctorates in Business Management (DBA) programmes in joint venture with Bradford University School of Management. This was delivered in Barbados for senior managers, administrators and politicians and was aimed at developing the small island states of the Caribbean.