



CASE STUDY: CMA CGM

How we are helping a global shipping company develop its next-generation leaders worldwide.

THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

CMA CGM, a Marseille-based shipping group operating in 160 countries worldwide, had recently acquired NOL, Singapore’s largest listed shipping company. CMA CGM wanted to share best practices in the newly enlarged group. But the company soon realised that there were bigger issues at stake. **The shipping industry was rapidly consolidating, and throwing up new strategic challenges.** Questions such as whether the CMA CGM should shift from a ‘port-to-port’ service to a ‘door-to-door’ model, compete with clients or collaborate with competitors, couldn’t necessarily be solved by the Marseille-based directors alone.



“FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance’s approach is unique”



‘They listened carefully to our strategic and learning needs’

THE LEARNING CHALLENGE

The board wanted to widen its circle of strategic thinkers to include the next generation of leaders—junior managers with on-the-ground experience who could help make sense of a fast-changing business environment. Tomorrow’s strategy would have to come from tomorrow’s leaders. So a group of handpicked, fast-tracked middle managers with technical expertise in logistics, HR, finance and more, needed to learn how to think strategically about leadership, logistics and innovation, and be able to discuss their ideas at the highest levels of the company.

As a major industry player, **CMA CGM needed a learning partner that not only understood its particular position but could also deliver programs where and when they were needed**—starting in Asia, and extending to Europe, the US, the Middle East and Africa. FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance, supported by its worldwide alliance of academics, experts and practitioners, fitted the bill. Indeed, it was an alliance partner, Paris-based Sciences Po, that recommended the Corporate Learning Alliance to provide the flexibility, geographic reach and analytical depth that CMA CGM sought.

An alliance team visited CMA CGM’s operations in Marseille to discuss with HR, logistics and other managers what issues were most pressing. Mindful of different cultural and geographic perspectives, the team also sounded out the views of its Asia-based staff. **Three main concerns emerged: how could the company be more innovative, more digital and more aware of how global trends affect the shipping industry.**

“It was a pleasure working with FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance. Their approach is unique. They listened carefully to our strategic and learning needs, and were always flexible and innovative about program design and delivery. We can work with them effectively all over the world”

Paul Haeri, Vice President, Human Resources CMA CGM

SELECTED EDUCATORS



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THE LEARNING SOLUTION

The first, three-month program took place in Singapore for 30 Asia-based managers (*many of whom were meeting for the first time*). The Corporate Learning Alliance assembled an expert team from Financial Times, IE Business School and alliance partners Singapore Management University and Sciences Po. **The team ran three face-to-face modules lasting 2-3 days each, two online learning webinars, and five innovation challenges.**

The first module focused on how to lead transformation in a volatile environment; the second analysed operational excellence in shipping logistics; and a third showed how to foster and implement innovation. These modules were interspersed by two webinars run by Financial Times experts on acquisitions and shipping trends.



“We can work with FT | IE CLA effectively all over the world”



“[FT | IE CLA] were always flexible and innovative about program design and delivery.”

IMPACT AND VALUE

One of the program's most important element was the 'transformational challenges.' From the outset, participants from different divisions and countries were grouped into project teams of four to five people. Each team was asked to develop projects on such subjects as digital transformation, sharing best practices and 'door-to-door' shipping. To crystallise their ideas as precisely and concisely as possible, each team presented an initial 90-second video 'explainer' to senior management who then considered whether to take the idea further. Each team was also allotted a 'sponsor'— a senior VP who knew CMA CGM's business well, and whose role was to guide, advise and open doors to key stakeholders to support the teams' research.

Over the course of seven sessions held between modules, the teams passed through key innovation stages such as the development of a detailed business plan, ending with a 15-minute video conference pitch to senior directors in Marseille. The **successful transformational projects were then discussed further, refined or implemented.**

Following the success of the first program in developing an innovative and strategic mindset, two more programs were designed for 2018. Importantly, the company wanted to retain geographic flexibility, with interlinked modules to be held in Marseille, Virginia US, and Singapore.

“The program relies on FT | IE CLA, which gives it flexibility, coverage geography and the depth of analysis required by the CMA CGM Group”

Paul Haeri, Vice President, Human Resources CMA CGM

FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance is a customised executive education and development company. A joint venture between Financial Times and IE Business School, we were formed in response to growing calls for more relevant, timely and engaging corporate learning solutions that help leaders and companies address a broad range of business transformation challenges.