



CASE STUDY: DIMENSION DATA

How we created an ongoing, flexible learning partnership to support an ambitious growth and transformation strategy.



THE STRATEGIC AND LEARNING CHALLENGE

Dimension Data, a global technology integrator and managed services company, had ambitious goals. A subsidiary of NTT since 2010, Dimension Data employed more than 28,000 staff across 47 countries on five continents. It aimed to double sales by transforming itself from a systems integrator to a managed services provider in its rapidly changing markets. To achieve its goal, **Dimension Data needed to enhance the skills and expertise of its high-potential employees.**

This meant working with a flexible learning partner that could design, adapt and enhance its bespoke learning programs as and when required. It would also ensure that employees perceived the company as being serious about promoting talent, encouraging collaboration and preparing its next generation of leaders.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND EXECUTION

Dimension Data found its long-term learning partner in FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance. Both companies spent more than a year carefully crafting a program at the most senior levels. The result was the launch of the 'Fast Track Program' (FTP), providing high-potential employees with the theoretical knowledge as well as the practical skills in finance, marketing, innovation, leadership and strategy. The blend of face-to-face and virtual learning reflected the working day of Dimension Data's talent.

As Dimension Data's Program Specialist Carla Bowker explained: "... candidates from across the organisation were nominated for Fast Track by their managers based on evidence of ambition, ability, agility and achievement. Around 70-85 participants are now selected each year, an increase on the initial intake of 50 participants, thanks to growing demand for the program internally."



“FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance takes time to really understand us as an organisation. They understand what our strategy and goals are, and where we are going as a company.”

Victoria Ward, Director of HR, Dimension Data.

The program began with a two-day, face-to-face, regional induction that allowed participants to meet one another as well as the coaches and mentors for the following months. The initial meeting was followed by five months of supported, online tuition before participants met again in Madrid for a week of intensive learning with selected educators (*see below*).

Participants were then divided into groups of seven and given real-world challenges that the company faced, to be solved over the following five months. Each group presented its ideas, such as cloud computing solutions and talent retention, to a panel of Dimension Data executives, followed by a formal ‘graduation ceremony.’ The teams’ recommendations have been explored further by the relevant business areas and in many cases now form the basis of new initiatives and processes.

The first program was seen not just as a way to develop emerging leaders—*“a wonderful experience both professionally and personally”* reported one participant—but also to solve problems that stood in the way of the company’s growth target.



“FT | IE CLA feels like an extension of our own L&D team.”

SELECTED EDUCATORS



Prof. Martin Boehm,
Professor of Marketing



Prof. Virginia Bombin,
Professor of Finance



Prof. Carl Kock,
Professor of Strategy



Prof. Juan Carlos Pastor,
Professor of Leadership



Prof. Joseph Pistrui,
Professor of Innovation

A TRUE LEARNING PARTNER

Following the FTP’s initial success, three new editions were launched. Moreover, FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance was asked to design a new, six-month blended program—the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP)—for its senior leaders in Europe.

Again, a combination of video conferences, multimedia cases, guided business project preparation, and face-to-face sessions in Madrid and Segovia, provided senior leaders with an understanding of company strategy as well as management functions. Further programs are currently in development.

The continuation of the FTP and the addition of the ALDP, reflects the FT | IE Corporate Learning Alliance own ethos and strategy of developing true, long-time learning partnership at all levels of management.



“Our relationship with [FT|IECLA] has been fantastic. I couldn’t be happier with the result.”
Victoria Ward, Director of HR, Dimension Data