



## Developing leadership competencies and embracing company values among Spanish and Portuguese managers at Societe Generale working in a changing corporate and investment banking environment.

### Business Context

Societe Generale has been present in Spain since 1906 offering retail banking products until 1992. Since 1992, the Group has changed its focus to Corporate and Investment Banking, Asset Management and Banking Services. Today the Group is one of the major players in the Iberian market with 600 employees in Spain and Portugal.

In 2015, 35 Spanish and Portuguese managers attended a custom programme, held during the company's annual senior managers' summer seminar, designed jointly by Societe Generale Human Resources and FT|IE Corporate Learning Alliance, to reinforce a new leadership model and the Societe Generale Group values.

### Programme Aims

The aim of the programme was to reinforce the Group's values that represent SG's identity and how it will make a difference in its market sector. The goals were to:

- Discuss the idea of leadership and its implications
- Practise and develop key personal abilities
- Explore the concept of personal leadership
- Personalise the values that embody the Group's leadership model:
  - Team spirit
  - Innovation
  - Responsibility
  - Commitment

Opening the programme, Donato González, SG Group Country head, said: "We need to develop competencies in our managers that have become essential in a changing environment. We need to lead with exemplarity and courage. A good leader develops those working around them. Commitment and honesty are key qualities in a good leader."

### The Programme

The day and a half programme, customised to Societe Generale, was held in the academic environment of IE Business School in Segovia. This was away from the busy cities of Madrid and Lisbon where the offices are based and where the managers could have been distracted from the programme aims. The location also aided the thought processes and allowed the managers to strengthen ties among themselves.

The programme was led by Ignacio Álvarez de Mon, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at IE Business School and an expert in leadership, personal development and coaching. During the first day, he challenged the audience with concepts such as active listening, the 'leader as a victim or main character', 'feedforward' rather than feedback, co-creation<sup>1</sup> or empathy. These topics were discussed within a programme in which managers actively participated and had the chance to think individually and collectively about the meaning of leadership, using learning techniques that included:

- Debate
- Group analysis
- Practical case studies
- Roleplay

Group values were discussed in depth during the second day. Maite Godino, Head of Human Resources, presented the Group's leadership model in perspective, and introduced the global framework that described the link between values, behaviours and HR processes. Managers had to define what the four values of Team spirit, Innovation, Responsibility and Commitment meant to them individually and how the bank's clients fit into the picture. The participants also brainstormed other possible values that would be relevant to them.

Day 1	Day 2
Programme leader: Ignacio Álvarez de Mon, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at IE Business School	
What is involved in leadership?	Societe Generale leadership model within a global framework: presented by Maite Godina, Head of Human Resources
Key personal leadership: leadership and change	New leadership model
Leading is communicating	The challenge of values-based leadership

### Results and Conclusions

- The importance of leading by example, courage and honesty were reiterated.
- Through the experiential methodology used, the new values and leadership model were embraced by the senior executives attending in an intuitive and spontaneous way, resulting in a long-lasting influence on the participants.
- The challenge for Societe Generale's managers is to embody the leadership model and cascade it through the organisation. In Spain an in-house workshop was also held to make all staff with managerial responsibilities have been made aware of the model.

### Societe Generale Participant Feedback

"Values and leadership models are not easily transmitted. But thanks to a good professor and the effort made, the messages got across. I take back to the office much to think about and put into practice."

**Managing Director**

"Networking among managers was one of my main takeaways. These experiences act as icebreakers, increasing the probability of success when various business lines need to team up to take on a complex project."

**Managing Director**

"The intervention of an external expert to give us a different perspective of the leadership model was a brilliant idea. Initiatives like this give us essential cues to act ambitiously and put our values at the heart of our communications and at the centre of our activities."

**Chief Operating Officer**

"I would highlight that we have a very unified group with a clear culture shared by all. The event organisation was perfect and the training very useful. It is important to refresh on a regular basis what leadership means."

**Head of Debt Capital Markets for Corporates and Financial Institutions in Spain.**

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<sup>1</sup>Co-creation: a management initiative, or form of economic strategy, that brings different parties together (for instance a company and a group of customers) in order to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome.