

Strengthening Leadership at Actelion to Increase Commercial Results

Actelion Pharmaceutical Ltd is a leading biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative drugs for diseases with significant unmet medical needs.

Faced with a challenging and increasingly competitive market place for the existing portfolio and preparing the organization for a product transformation, they contacted MCE to improve their overall leadership capabilities, specifically in their commercial—sales and marketing—organization.

The Challenge

Actelion needed to adapt its approach to commercial leadership, harmonize quality standards of its processes, become more efficient in high-quality execution of leadership and—at the same time—respond to regional business needs.

In the past, Actelion's approach to management was somewhat de-centralized. Given the challenges evolving in the marketplace, Actelion aimed to build a more streamlined, systematic, unified and slightly more centralized sales approach that could be tailored for regional needs. Such an approach would require a different style of leadership in commercial functions, specifically the first line management in the sales organization.

Actelion wanted to become more efficient in the high-quality execution of leadership.

Following discussions between MCE and Actelion, MCE's Senior Associates on the project outlined an initiative to develop Actelion's commercial leadership—with a special focus on the sales organization—by combining the MCE leadership model with



Actelion Pharmaceutical Ltd. Headquarters in Alschwil/Basel Switzerland

a customized **One-Job-Three-Roles: Leader, Manager, Coach** approach.

MCE and Actelion agreed that success would be measured by two metrics:

1. The feedback of participants: what value this workshop program had added to their leadership capabilities and behavior
2. How sustainably participants had implemented their **Personal Leadership Initiatives** in daily practice

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Dr. Christoph F. Schmidt,
VP Head of Global Commercial Excellence





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The second key element was the Actelion Business Case that was part of the second workshop. A concrete and relevant Actelion business scenario was chosen to engage participants in how to transfer workshop learnings into a concrete leadership situation in daily business. A typical example was the planning, implementation process and operational details of forming a new sales team structure for a new product to launch.

How Actelion Benefited from the Program

More than 60 participants were trained, supported and coached by the workshop program over four years. The participants represented a substantial part of Actelion's world-wide commercial leadership resources. Actelion's leadership approach and capabilities were enriched with an integrated and sustainable approach focusing on how to lead, manage and coach people in the most appropriate and effective way. The workshop program contributed substantially to Actelion's overall organizational strength, commercial effectiveness and leadership capabilities.

As Dr Christoph F. Schmidt, VP Head of Global Commercial Excellence, said, "The customized and integrated approach stands out. It delivered a high-value program for our commercial leaders world-wide, providing us with a competitive edge".

Development and Solution

MCE Senior Associates interviewed numerous Actelion stakeholders from sales, marketing and business unit management. They also interviewed commercial stakeholders from different management levels within different regions of the Actelion organization. The interviews helped them gain a deeper understanding of the leadership challenges in a changing market environment for Actelion first-line and second-line commercial managers.

Based on this input, MCE developed a workshop series named **Sales Leadership for Sales Directors and First Line Managers**. The success of the series resulted in a redefinition of its requirements and its evolution into a program called **Integrated Commercial Leadership**. Specific leadership topics from the program were presented to a wider audience during a Sales Director Conference, Brand Summits and General Manager Meetings.

Customized Content and Approach

One of the foundations of the workshop program was the MCE leadership model. It was complemented with a conceptual, integrated leadership approach,

One-Job-Three-Roles: Leader, Manager, Coach. Participants in the workshop were asked "When and how do you have to fill and practice the three roles: lead, manage and coach your people?" For each of the three roles, supportive and inspiring tools, processes and exercises were discussed and practiced to achieve the learning objectives.

Two key elements in the workshop helped participants communicate and transfer what they learned into their daily practices within the organization. First, each participant was asked to define a **Personal Leadership Initiative** for the next six months. Participants were expected to implement their initiatives between the first and second workshops of the program. The Personal

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Leadership Initiative normally covered the implementation of tools, processes and actions discussed and practiced during the first workshop. In the second workshop these initiatives were discussed during a one-to-one coaching session between each participant and the MCE Senior Associate.

About Actelion

Actelion Ltd. is a leading biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative drugs for diseases with significant unmet medical needs. The company has its corporate headquarters in Allschwil/Basel, Switzerland where it was founded in 1997. Its shares have been listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (ticker symbol ALTN) since 2000. In September 2008, Actelion shares began trading as part of the blue-chip SMI® (Swiss Market Index).

The company has proven its ability to discover new compounds and to rapidly move them from research through development to commercialization. In particular, Actelion scientists were among the first to work in the field of endothelin receptor antagonists (ERA), leading to Tracleer® and now the tailored ERA Opsumit®.

Actelion has more than 30 operative affiliates around the world including the United States, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Japan, Switzerland and a



number of EU countries. These subsidiaries provide distribution, sales and marketing services.

For more information, visit: <http://www.actelion.com>

Talk to MCE about Strengthening Your Leadership Capabilities

MCE Senior Associates have 20+ years of senior management experience. Throughout their careers, they have led strategy implementation and change many times. They can help your management team identify gaps in leadership capabilities, and

then work with the team to develop their knowledge and skills in key areas. MCE associates approach leadership and strategy implementation issues, not just from theory but from what works in real life, in different contexts. We can work with

your organization flexibly at all levels to implement change and improve results related to your corporate strategy.

Telephone: +32 (0)2 543 21 20
Email: info@mce-ama.com
Website: www.mce-ama.com