

AMGEN: The Horizon Programme

Client Success Story

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About Amgen

In 2015, Amgen celebrates 35 years of pioneering science. With a presence in more than 75 countries, Amgen is committed to helping patients suffering from serious illnesses by discovering, developing, manufacturing and delivering innovative human therapeutics. Amgen focuses on areas of high unmet medical need and leverages its biologics manufacturing expertise to strive for solutions that improve health outcomes and dramatically improve people's lives. The European head office of Amgen is located in Zug, Switzerland.



Background

In 2013, Amgen Europe concluded that instead of focusing on external resources such as MBA recruitment programmes to fulfil senior-level job openings it was time to step up efforts to grow internal talent into senior leadership roles. In order to prepare managers for broader functional leadership positions, Amgen wanted a business-focused programme that would provide participants of varied specialist backgrounds with a well-rounded curriculum of business knowledge and skills.

Gary Sagar, Human Resources Director (Talent), emphasizes that Horizon is an invitation-based career transition programme, not an open management development programme. Participants are nominated based on internal talent reviews, and sponsored by senior executives.

Finding the Right Partner

- Amgen sees Horizon as a major long-term investment in key people, and Gary Sagar insisted on a solid procurement process in selecting the implementation partner, with a call for tender leading to shortlisted candidates.
- In their search, Amgen considered three options: classic business schools with their prestige and thought leadership, executive search firms branching out to executive education, and MCE with its solid, business-centric approach.
- Finally, says Gary Sagar, it is the facilitators that make or break the programme. With MCE, Amgen found the right balance of industry knowledge, subject matter expertise and - most importantly - an engaging style that connects well with the culture of Amgen.

Collaborative Process

Internally at Amgen, a three-party task force of HR, L&D and business leaders worked on the design of Horizon. Business leaders at HQ and Affiliates were interviewed and involved in shaping the solution. Listening early on to people who will later send participants to the programme, emphasizes Gary Sagar, has been one of the key success factors.

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Anatomy of the Solution

Horizon is much more than a collection of training sessions. Participants embark on a carefully orchestrated year-long journey consisting of professionally guided assessments, case study presentations to executive panels, classroom learning sessions provided by MCE, internally facilitated development centres, and virtual “Business Insight” modules delivered by senior Amgen leaders.

How Success is Measured

The Horizon programme is currently measured on three levels. First, participant feedback provides an immediate indicator of quality. Second, a link is made with the original objectives – to retain and grow selected participants in their careers. Amgen tracks the retention of Horizon participants (after the first year, 100%) and the actual career moves of past participants on an annual basis.

As Horizon is now nearing the end of its second year, Gary Sagar is already reflecting on possible future measurements – for example, how to measure the actual success of Horizon participants in their new leadership roles.

One thing is for sure: Horizon is a living programme with continuous improvement and adaptation to the organization’s needs.

The formal classroom sessions, organized at MCE’s world-class facilities in Brussels, cover three key areas:

- **Module 1: Strategy**

In this module participants gain a solid understanding of how strategies are made, and the journey from strategic analysis through strategic choices to execution.

- **Module 2: Change Management**

This module provides participants with a pragmatic toolkit to introduce and manage change in their functional organizations, deal with resistance, and demonstrate impactful presence in delivering their leadership messages.

- **Module 3: Operational Excellence**

In this module participants from varied backgrounds gain a common understanding and vocabulary of financial performance and operational improvement methodologies, as well as tips and tools for managing the performance of their people.

Each module is delivered by specialist faculty incorporating best practice examples, industry-specific cases and real-life Amgen scenarios into an illustrative and coherent package.

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Engaging Stakeholders For Change - It's Working

So far, the feedback from management has been tremendously positive. The best evidence that the programme is working is the fact that it continues to be over-subscribed. Even with 100% charge-back, business leaders are keen to nominate new participants, and executive involvement in programme events (mentorship, panel discussions etc.) continues to be high.

According to Gary Sagar there are three factors that make a difference:

- First, the programme is a joint effort of HR, L&D and business with clearly defined roles and touch points throughout the process, and frequent feedback loops back to business. Business leaders are actively and visibly involved in the sponsorship and delivery of Horizon.
- Second, the programme content is actively managed and monitored. Lessons learned are immediately implemented into the next year's programme, and the content is evolving based on business strategy and needs.
- Third, it is critical that dedicated resources are allocated to manage the programme. At Amgen, programme manager Anja Schwager oversees all aspects of the programme. At MCE, a designated lead faculty stays in close contact with Amgen, attends key events such as the Launch Day, and ensures a "red thread" throughout the various training modules with specialist faculty.

"The Horizon program has been a hugely successful talent program for Amgen. We are now in the third cohort and we are achieving our objectives already through investing in talent for future growth. We have 100% retention so far and some evidence of career growth. Program quality, evidenced by participant, manager, HR and Executive feedback is consistently high resulting in high demand for places. The great partnership and flexibility of MCE to adapt and meet our needs has been a key factor in the success of Horizon"



Gary Sagar,
Human Resources Director (Talent)

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About MCE

MCE, as part of the AMA Global Network, is a leading Learning and Development Provider in Europe, Middle East and Africa. We inspire more than 500 organizations and over 8,000 managers and leaders each year through our Customized Learning Programmes. We have been in the EMEA region for 55 years and our team of 200 passionate Learning and Development professionals focuses each day on supporting you to achieve the impact you need at individual, team and organizational levels. If you would like to know more about our Customized Learning Programmes simply contact us.

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