



Management
Centre Europe®



Client Story

AMPCO

Equatorial Guinea Nationals Leadership Program



Atlantic Methanol Production Company LLC (“AMPCO”) runs a world scale methanol plant located on Bioko Island in Equatorial Guinea, West Africa. AMPCO’s Punta Europa plant is one of the safest and most reliable methanol plants in the world. The plant started production in 2001 and produces roughly 1,000,000 metric tons of methanol per year. With its location in the Atlantic Basin, AMPCO is strategically located to supply markets in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.

AMPCO’s People

The team is composed of a diverse community of expats and nationals working together and respecting the core AMPCO values. More than 95% of the staff are based at the production facility in Equatorial Guinea and over 90% are Equatorial Guinea nationals.

AMPCO has many different technical and leadership roles including operators, maintenance technicians, other plant roles as well as administrative support. The employees benefit from and seek relevant learning and development opportunities to further their careers within AMPCO.

Nancy Ampim Elonga, AMPCO’s Vice President Of HR & Corporate Affairs explained that the HR team is a vital part of the organization, and they support employee development with many learning initiatives. “People are the foundation of our company and AMPCO has heavily invested in training in the past”, explained Nancy. Areas covered ranged from technical knowledge to interpersonal skills and the importance of these, lies in having a more motivated workforce with internationally competitive skills that ultimately drive the company to sustainably achieve its goals.

To date Leadership has not been a key part of the learning & development initiatives, but to reach future goals, AMPCO recognized it needed a highly competent and effective future leadership pipeline.



The Background & Initial Goals

AMPCO's has committed to the Equatorial Guinean government to develop national workers and eventually have a fully competent national workforce leading the company. Towards this goal, AMPCO has already achieved a 90% nationalization goal and is focusing on the future.

AMPCO aim to provide the right tools to their senior management to effectively drive change within the organization. This project began with a gap analysis of the different employment areas.

Some of the conclusions taken from that analysis included:

- to reach further nationalization gains, there is a strong need for leadership development
- there are limited leadership development and opportunities in Equatorial Guinea with existing universities and schools
- cultural norms in the region differ from western business culture

Bearing this analysis in mind, Nancy Ampim Elonga and the Learning and Development Team worked with the Senior Management team to set initial goals for AMPCO's first ever Leadership Development Program.

- Improving the overall working culture and increasing employee productivity, while allowing the AMPCO employees to be exposed to new and refreshing leadership ideas
- And more directly, provide training in key leadership areas to a broad group of EG nationals including those currently in supervisory positions and those deemed to have potential as future leaders
- Ensuring the effectiveness of all future leadership training - before, during, and after by making sure that people use what they have learnt



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“Leadership styles is something I’m now taking into account when addressing problems, how best to communicate with people in a way that will get through to them. Before the training I was aware of concepts such as planning, and meeting set up but the training made me more aware of their importance”

Finding the Right Partner for AMPCO

We asked Brian Jackson, AMPCO’s Vice President of Commercial Operations about choosing the right partner. Brian explained “At AMPCO we were looking for a partner that would prepare and run a programme that culturally and professionally met our needs. We desired our programme have an impact that would be appreciated in the organization for years to come. We required a collaborative partner interested in supporting our goal of developing AMPCO’s local workforce.”

AMPCO had already worked with MCE in the past and knew that MCE was collaborative, culturally aware and had the experience that they were looking for. MCE had a comprehensive understanding of their needs, but most importantly MCE listened. As a result, HR and Senior Management decided to work with MCE.



“Emotional intelligence is something I have always used but I learned the more technical aspects of it during training. And I try to always be aware of how and what to say things to different people”



It is all about Collaboration

When asking both Nancy Ampim Elonga and Brian Jackson to describe the process of working with MCE in just a few words, the same 3 words came up - collaborative, welcoming and available. MCE was seen as a very open organization, who made AMPCO feel supported right from the first contact. AMPCO and MCE always looked for the best solution for every situation. Win-win was a key part of the working relationship.

The whole process of establishing the goals and outcomes went smoothly. MCE worked directly with the AMPCO team to drill down to the real goals. MCE suggested models based on past successes, but listened to AMPCO's unique situation. Models and modules were adapted to AMPCO's needs and environment.



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“I learned about To-Do List effectiveness, doing things and not just putting them on the list, like Koen taught us, and now I try to give feedback even to my supervisor”

Development of the Solution for AMPCO

This was again a collaborative process and AMPCO's needs were clearly understood and represented in the solution. There were several meetings and emails exchanges, until everyone was fully onboard, aligned and in agreement with the final program. The program needed to have clear and direct results.

Brian Jackson, AMPCO's Vice President of Commercial Operations also explained it was key that the programme would not interrupt ongoing business continuity. The solution was half-day sessions with half of the attendees in the morning and half in the evening. Another idea was to make it a two-week program to ensure employee engagement, that may have been difficult over a much longer period.

Nancy, when it came to choosing the MCE Senior Associates who would facilitate the program, it was again a collaborative experience. MCE provided profiles that AMPCO reviewed and approved. What AMPCO needed was diversity – in gender and nationality - that represented the diversity that AMPCO seeks to instill in its' company culture.

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“I learned from this training, and Pedro specifically, to see the positive aspects of difficult situations.

If I cannot change it in five minutes, I can let it go. I see things from a different perspective”



The AMPCO EGN Leadership Development Program

The innovative and customized Leadership Development Program consists of key modules in communication, influencing, people management and leadership skills. Participants were required to complete both pre-work and post-work, as well as ten classroom sessions. The sessions were run over ten days with Group 1 taking the program in the morning and Group 2 in the afternoon.

The 10 sessions are organized into 3 key areas:



Leading MySelf includes modules covering the challenges of leadership, emotional intelligence, trust and personal effectiveness. The goal is to ensure that AMPCO's future leaders have the confidence and skills to become effective leaders.

Leading MyTeam includes modules covering generating motivation, dealing with conflict, delegation, and team performance. The goal is to develop the people management skills of AMPCO's leaders.

Leading MyBusiness includes modules covering managing change, problem solving, and personal actions plans. The goal is to give participants the skills they need to effectively implement the strategy.

Before and after the classroom training, participants meet with their direct managers to align on objectives and report on their personal action plans. This is to ensure that the program remains hands-on, practical and results oriented.

To date more than 65 leaders and future leaders have participated in the AMPCO Leadership Program and with more planned to take the program every year.

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“I now listen to people first”



The Feedback

The impact of the programme has been noticeable companywide according to Nancy Ampim Elonga, AMPCO's Vice President Of HR & Corporate Affairs.

The company is now evaluating the positive impact of the program in detail, but the following points are already clear:

- Many employees have a more positive attitude
- Motivation has visibly increased
- Participants are already asking for the next 2.0 program
- Knowledge and skills learnt during the program are being shared actively throughout the organization
- There is change in the way people are leading

One comment from a participant explains some of this change clearly "I now listen to people first".

AMPCO has directly shown its commitment to its people and their management development with this leadership program. The organization is also delivering on its promise to the Equatorial Guinea government to have a fully competent national workforce leading the company. And finally, the participants are becoming better managers and leaders.

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“Negative feedback and how to give it is something I have implemented from the training. How to give it without making the person feel undervalued, such as by talking to them in private as opposed of in front of everybody else.”



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