



**MSC**

**MCE**

Management  
Centre Europe®



**Client Story**

**MSC Cruises**

**Leadership Development  
Programme**



***"Our managerial and leadership capabilities as well as our technical abilities will be challenged by our constant business evolution. We need to ensure, more than ever, high performance results and strong team motivation, while ensuring a constant development of our people competencies."***

***Gianni Onorato***

# MSC Cruises

## Leadership Development Programme

Entering the cruise business in 1988 and now registered in Geneva/Switzerland, MSC Cruises is the world's largest privately held cruise company, employing people worldwide and having offices in more than 20 countries. MSC Cruises is part of the Mediterranean Shipping Company S.A. (MSC), founded in Brussels in 1970, the world's second biggest container shipping operator.



### Background

In 2017, MSC Cruises set out an ambitious 10-year growth strategy to build the youngest and most advanced cruise ships in the world. With several new classes of ships in development, MSC plans to add 17 new ships to its fleet. In order to deliver the strategy it was recognized that like the ships, the management team also needs regular investment and maintenance. The Executive Chairman, CEO and Chief HR Officer agreed that now was the right time to introduce a programme of development that would grow and prepare managers for leadership in the growing organization at time of unprecedented change. **For this reason, we have invested in the MSC Cruises Leadership Programme.**

In essence, MSC Cruises recognizes that cruising is a people business and therefore the continued success of the organization will come through its people. Equally they understand that the attributes that have made MSC successful so far, will need to be built upon and developed as more talent is recruited into the business from outside during this exciting period of growth. For many this will require a change in mindset.

Therefore, Elia Congiu, CHRO, emphasized the need to build on the core values of the company including 'family' and 'care for people', whilst re-focusing the managers on what is really important and adds value to all the MSC stakeholders: Remembering that customers and guests are at the core.



# Finding the Right Partner

MSC sees the programme as a major long-term investment in its management cadre and their Leadership Development team were determined to find the right partner to work with over what could be several years of implementation.

In the procurement process MSC considered three different options: classic business schools with their prestige and thought leadership but academic approach, pure Leadership Development consultancies and Management Centre Europe with its proven, business-centric approach and commercially focused faculty.

In MCE, MSC found the right balance of subject matter expertise, business leadership experience, the ability to customize solutions and global presence.

Elia Congiu explained: "I had experienced first-hand some of MCE's open programmes and through the selection process found an engaging and flexible style that connected well with the culture of MSC."

Finally, they wanted an Account Management team and facilitators, with whom they could develop strong personal relationships and who would quickly get to know their business. They believed that these relationships would be key to the programme.



***"I had experienced first-hand some of MCE's open programmes and through the selection process found an engaging and flexible style that connected well with the culture of MSC."***

***Elia Congiu***

## Collaborative Process

MSC had never run a business-wide development initiative. Previously, development had been driven at a local level, was sometimes sporadic and not coordinated in terms of goals.

MSC now needed a company-wide aligned strategic solution that would be fit for and engage the whole business.

MCE and MSC therefore worked very closely together and took time to ensure the right solution was developed. Initially MCE worked with the internal team at MSC, including the CHRO and HR Business Partners to create a draft approach to the programme.

MCE then interviewed and worked with business leaders from across the globe to help shape and endorse the solution. Engaging with business leaders early on who would attend the programme themselves and also have people from their teams attend, was a key success factor.



# The Solution

Whilst the programme has three different modules, it is more than simply a set of training sessions. MSC and MCE engage with participants at several key points along the journey.

An initial invitation from the CHRO brings the participants together for the first time in a 'virtual meeting' to introduce them to the programme, the content, the facilitator and to set up some key pre-work. This leads on to the face to face learning event, an output of which is a set of personal commitments and actions. These are then reviewed in terms of progress and benefits at a second 'virtual meeting' three or four months after the event.

In order to engage with the whole organization, the classroom sessions are run at a range of MSC selected venues around the globe in line with the MSC organization.

Initially the solution was to have three levels of programme, targeting different levels of seniority, however MSC quickly recognized that the content of the first programme was equally relevant to all managers in the organization.

They therefore decided that initially, all 450 shore-based managers would attend module one and then they would select smaller numbers of managers to attend module two and then module three.



# 3 Modules

## Module 1:

### Getting Ready to Lead

In this module participants prepare to step up and lead people by gaining a strong understanding of the difference between Management and Leadership, developing increased self-awareness and recognising their own values and style. A key output is to help them become more focused on higher value added activities, through better people leadership.

## Module 2:

### Leading Change and Leading Teams

This module helps the participants manage change through tools for implementing change but also understanding the human reaction to change and why change fails. They also focus on how to develop high-performance teams particularly in times of change and in the MSC context of multi-cultural and remote teams.

## Module 3:

### Leading the Organization and Performance

In this module, the delegates learn the ingredients of a successful business strategy and how to develop a strategic vision. They develop an understanding of and begin to apply the concepts of transformational leadership and executing a strategy. This is supported with sessions on motivation, coaching, innovation and delivering inspirational messages



MSC are keen to ensure they have faculty delivering the programme who know their business, bring energy and inspiration to the training room and engage the delegates with best practice examples, case studies and MSC scenarios that bring the content to life in a coherent way.

# It's Working!

Half of the target 450 managers have attended module one with plans already in place for the remaining half.

Module two has been successfully piloted and will be rolled out across the last quarter of 2019 and 2020. Module three will follow to fit with the overall progress of the programme; the intention being that managers attend 'subsequent modules' around 12 months after the previous module.

Demand to attend the first module is high and plans are in place to take it to South Africa and South America, following the successes across Europe, in China and the USA.

Additionally, whilst the programme was originally intended just for shore-based managers, it has now been agreed that future sessions will now include 'on-board' managers.



## Background

According to the Leadership Development Team there are several factors that are making a difference:

- First, the programme design is a joint effort between HR Business Partners, business leaders and MCE
- The CEO introduces the module and senior business leaders also attend the training which is supported by central and local HR partners. This builds buy-in at all levels of management
- Third, the programme content and delivery is actively monitored and evaluated, with consistency of delivery and messages seen as key. This requires close partnership between MCE, faculty and MSC.
- Follow up and continued engagement with the learning. MSC and MCE are constantly reviewing ways in which to maintain this engagement





***"So far, the feedback from delegates and management has been overwhelmingly positive. As we enter the second full year of the programme MCE and MSC are already exploring ways to add further rigor to the evaluation process in order to more accurately gauge the impact."***

***Anna Matthews***

## **How Success is Measured**

MSC had never run a business-wide development initiative. Previously, development had been driven at a local level, was sometimes sporadic and not coordinated in terms of goals.

The programme is / will be measured on three levels.

1. The participant feedback provides an immediate indicator of quality.
2. The follow up virtual meeting reviews progress against action plans and commitments and the benefits derived. A great part of the expected impact will be behavioural and delegates are encouraged to describe the reactions to and benefits of new behaviours.
3. There will be an impact analysis linked to the original objectives and perceived values to the business.

To find out more about MSC Cruises please **visit [www.msccruises.com](http://www.msccruises.com)**



Management  
Centre Europe®



Management Centre Europe is the  
Leading International Management  
Development Provider in Europe,  
Middle East and Africa.

**Tel:** + 32 2 5432120

**Email:** [info@mce.eu](mailto:info@mce.eu)

**Website:** [www.mce.eu](http://www.mce.eu)