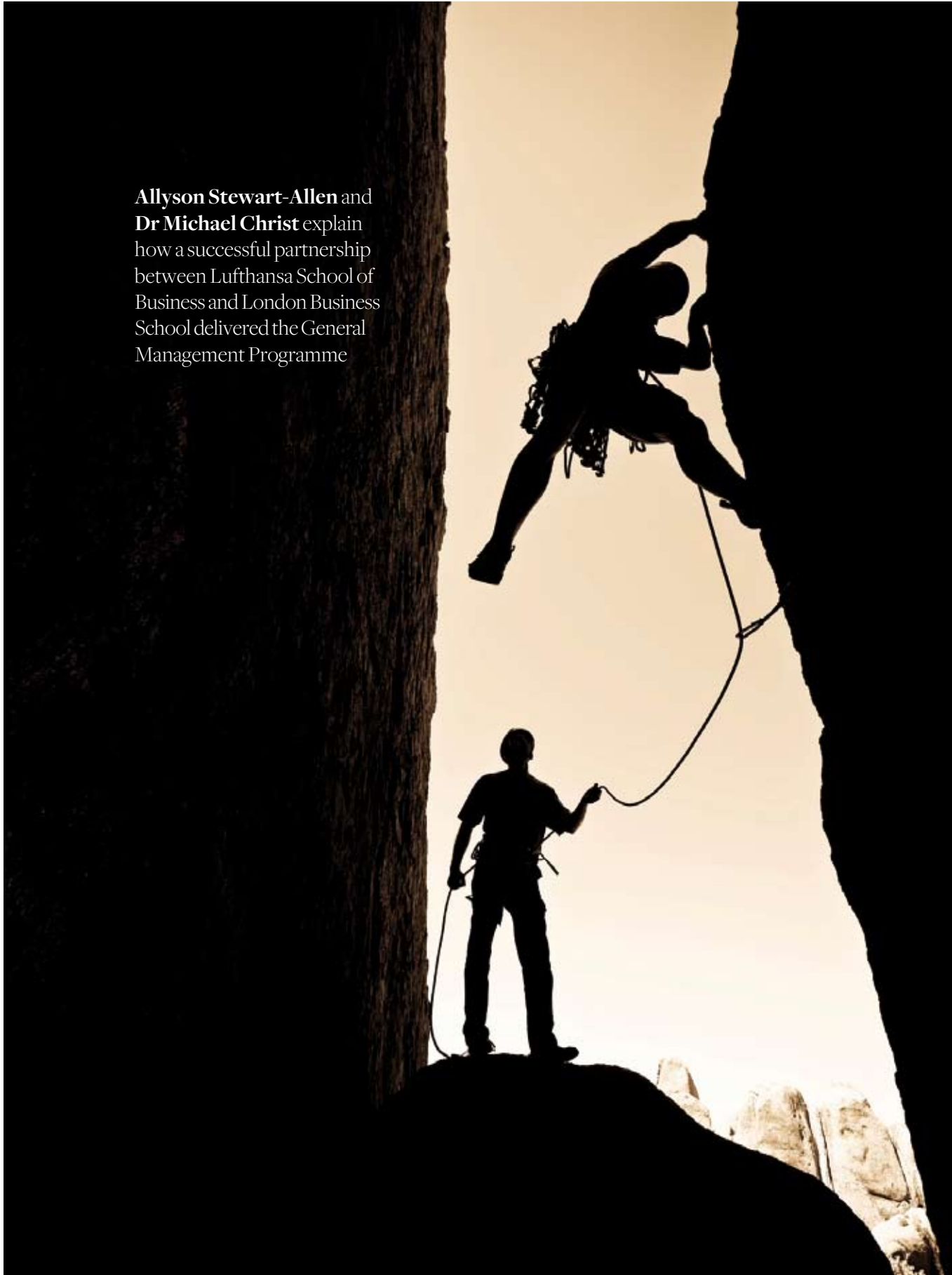


Allyson Stewart-Allen and
Dr Michael Christ explain
how a successful partnership
between Lufthansa School of
Business and London Business
School delivered the General
Management Programme



Partnership at its best

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Partnership between business and business schools can only happen between involved and responsible people

The Lufthansa School of Business (LHSB) was founded in 1998 as the first Corporate University in Germany.

Its mission is to provide advanced management training and development for the Lufthansa Group managers according to their requirements and in line with Lufthansa's strategy.

Across company borders LHSB is offering management programmes as well as platforms for dialogue, networking and information and therefore helps managers to enlarge their personal network and contributes to building a corporate leadership culture.

The strategic partnership between Lufthansa and three internationally renowned business schools – esmt in Germany and Ashridge and London Business School (LBS) in the UK – has existed for more than six years and has helped LHSB to design, offer and refine many successful programmes during this time.

The General Management Programme (GMP), a joint programme between LHSB and LBS, is a good example of this relationship model. Both partners believe this strategic partnership means more than the collaboration of two organisations. True partnership requires sustainability, trust, engagement, shared responsibility, continuous communication and “being involved”.

In the end, partnership between business and business schools can only happen between involved and responsible people. The joint GMP development process of LHSB and LBS from the very beginning to its first realisation in 2005 is proof how true partnership results in doing successful things together.

“True partnership needs common goals and shared objectives, which lead to an aligned approach”

Alignment to the corporate strategy

“In the beginning every journey starts with the desire to travel together.” Common goals and shared objectives are therefore essential. This was true of LHSB and LBS, who shared the vision of developing an innovative executive programme to tackle the development needs of senior managers with above-average performance and potential.

The overall objectives of the GMP are to enhance general management skills, to develop entrepreneurial potential, to get outside perspectives that can be applied to the business units of the participants and to enlarge their personal networks.

To achieve those objectives LHSB and LBS use an aligned approach for choosing, preparing and organising appropriate design elements and thus avoid “lost orientation” as well as randomness of content.

The design and delivery of the programme and its priorities are driven by the Strategic Development Process for Corporate Executive Development and LHSB products, who’s main objective is to connect individual management development and corporate organisational development in a bottom-up and top-down process.

In giving the corporate strategy tangible relevance for Human Resource Development (HRD) and for the creation of HR tools, programmes and projects, LH has found the “Holy Grail” of corporate executive development.

In the first bottom-up stage of this process, participants from all business partners within the LH Group – HR Development, corporate strategy, main strategic projects and representatives from the Board offices – are involved in structured interviews and workshops facilitated by the central HRD department.

These interviews and workshops enable HRD to collect and prioritise the main future requirements for management development in the LH Group. To gain a vital external perspective on trends in the field of learning and development, LHSB ensures that its preferred business school partners are involved from the outset.

LBS was asked like the others to give its view on future HRD trends in a forward-looking approach. The compiled results of these structured interviews and workshops are the so-called “Strategic Fields of Action”, which are in the second, top-down, stage of the Strategic Development Process, prioritised and amended by the Board of LH’s major business units via an online questionnaire.

The whole process creates a reliable basis to guide and to design management development products and programmes. Each design element within the GMP is derived from the Strategic Fields of Action and therefore assures the alignment of the GMP to the corporate strategy, external trends and the individual needs of the executives.

This demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness by focusing instantly on the “right things” such as the nomination of the “right” participants, the design of the “right” module themes and the creation of the “right” learning environment. This shows that true partnership is not just about theory, approaches and concepts but also about “walking the talk”.

The right participants

The participants of the GMP are top managers from across the LH Group, located around the world. As the participants usually act within an aviation ecosystem, managers from LH “system partners” (for example Frankfurt Airport, German Air Traffic Control and Munich Airport) are also invited to join the programme.



IMAGE COURTESY: ASHRIDGE



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True partnership is not just about theory, approaches and concepts but also about “walking the talk”



IMAGE COURTESY: LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

The nomination process includes the corporate HR development department, which provides the grading results that show the performance and potential of each participant. Furthermore, each individual candidate is nominated by the Board of the respective business unit. These carefully selected top managers receive an invitation, which is personally given to the nominee by one of his or her Board members. This demonstrates that participating on the GMP is one form of recognition of their value to the company.

“True partnership is about shared responsibility and changing the lead”

The right module themes

LBS “takes over the lead” while creating the concrete content of the structure of the programme. The partnership concept is thereby still maintained by the fact that each of these design steps are reviewed in detail and updated in consultation with LHSB.

The GMP is a three-module programme, each module consisting of four days plus an evening prior to the official start. The modules are three to four months apart, making the whole programme last approximately eight months. The three programme module themes are “strategic thinking and current



6 years

The strategic partnership between Lufthansa and esmt in Germany and Ashridge and London Business School (LBS) in the UK has existed for more than six years



trends”, “business transformation”, and “value creation and leadership”.

Each part of this deliberate sequence of modules is carefully designed to serve a particular purpose.

The strategy module examines the context in which Lufthansa competes and explores how companies choose to compete and derive long-term results from their markets.

The transformation module explores how organisations must focus on their chosen markets in the light of their strategies and transform themselves in order to exploit their strategic opportunities. Here the participants discover in what different ways organisations have to change in order to realise strategies and exploit the opportunities they either create or confront.

The leadership module explores how Lufthansa effects transformation through its people or how they help the organisation implement its corporate strategy by doing things differently.

Key to the success of the GMP is the enthusiastic support demonstrated by the Lufthansa Executive Board. Each Executive Board Member joins one GMP module as a keynote speaker and fosters the dialogue between

participants and Board members. That underlines the aspect that, next to the content of the modules, networking activities are seen as an essential part of the programme.

The right learning environment

To develop a creative learning environment the GMP takes place at three different international locations (London, Mumbai and Seeheim) and is therefore conducted in English.

Another design element is the implementation of peer-coaching groups, each with a series of inter-modular discussion and simulation exercises, bringing each module’s subject matter to life behaviourally in participants’ daily work.

It also helps to build bridges between the modules, keeps participants active and supports them in deepening their relationship. Field visits during the GMP – including for example tours of partners’ organisation as well as visits to an urban community development project in the biggest slum in Mumbai – are also deliberate parts of the design of the programme to help deepen the understanding among all participants of the challenges and co-dependencies across their organisations.

“True partnership means sharing sustainable success with each other”

Assessing the business impact

At the end of the third module of the programme, partnership also requires sharing sustainable success with each other.

A thorough programme evaluation of the impact of the GMP and its benefits for current and future participants is measured at two different levels.

First, after each GMP module participants receive an evaluation questionnaire developed jointly by LHSB and LBS. On top of the written evaluation an overall oral evaluation about all three modules is done with the group. Here participants are asked for their view of the most valuable aspects of the GMP, key elements they would retain intact and things they would modify or add.

The second level of the impact assessment is conducted four to six months after the last of the three GMP modules.

An online “company impact assessment” questionnaire measures the perceived residual impact of the GMP on the performance and behaviour of the participants according to the competency model of Lufthansa (the Aviation Leadership Compass).

Both tools – the oral and written module evaluations and the impact assessment – allow the GMP Programme Director and Project Manager to continually improve the programme from cycle to cycle. In order to further ensure consistency and quality assurance of the programme these individuals also attend each GMP module, making last-minute fine adjustments, answering queries from participants, faculties and other outside contributors.

LHSB and LBS form a strong team whose member are constantly focused on delivering sustainable impact on the company. Significant evaluation and performance outcomes have been achieved, so that the programme is now planned to be held for the fourth time in four years. **gf**

FURTHER INFORMATION

This article is an edited version of the winning entry in the EFMD Excellence in Practice Award 2009.

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More information on the 2010 EFMD Excellence In Practice Award can be found at: www.efmd.org/eip