



AMEC GROUP LIMITED

Creating excellence through executive development

The early 1990s saw a period of dramatic change within AMEC's UK businesses. With these changes AMEC Group Limited, the UK subsidiary of AMEC plc, the international project management and services company, increasingly recognised that adopting a more cohesive approach was the best way to achieve and sustain its competitive advantage.

In 1993, this led senior management, responsible for the development of its 15,000 staff; to analyse its business needs at the time. This analysis highlighted a lack of formal management/ development and that younger, key individuals needed to be developed in a more structured way. As a result, UK based international management consultancy, Coverdale, were invited to help AMEC to develop a Management Development Programme that would significantly help develop its younger managers. This initiative resulted in the formulation of what became known as AMEC's "Executive Development Programme (EDP)".

Steve Walden, AMEC's Learning & Development Programme Consultant and in-house coach, explains: "Coverdale were commissioned initially for their proven experience in being able to furnish organisations and their people with the vision, creativity, commitment and skills to bring about sustainable performance change and enhanced bottom line results. However, with

its breadth of expertise, the relationship has developed into an ongoing partnership which has lasted over ten years and seen the EDP programme develop above and beyond all our expectations."

The programme was primarily aimed at 18 individuals a year, who had been identified with potential of becoming senior personnel within five years. These individuals would be developed into the executives who would help to secure the company's future growth, by providing them with the both the essential strategic management skills and a knowledge of operations in other AMEC businesses.

The objectives of EDP were to develop a common culture across the company, to create an effective management style to deal effectively with uncertainty and change, and to initiate a change in the way delegate's manage, to get the best out of others. However, these original objectives have now evolved to include the key executive competencies of leadership, strategic thinking,

energy and drive, emotional intelligence and drive for results. The Coverdale-designed programme consists of four modules that act as a catalyst to motivate and develop the delegates over a period of one year. Each programme begins with an introductory dinner opened by senior management speakers, and the week-long modules that follow cover a structured approach to delivering goals, developing self awareness and leadership skills, developing commercial awareness and conclude with a module entitled 'Making It Happen'. Each delegate, under the guidance of a mentor (a senior line manager from AMEC), works on a live business project during the duration of EDP and many of these projects have been successfully transferred into AMEC's business.

Many of AMEC's core business processes, such as its Strategic Relationship Management; Risk Management and Knowledge Management methodologies have been developed and embedded company-wide as a direct result of EDP projects. Senior AMEC management considers that much of its success in securing new long-term business has been underpinned by these defining projects.

Gerry McGill, Managing Director responsible for Market Development, who acts as a mentor / sponsor says; "My personal learning has been enhanced through understanding more about the pressures people face when trying to play an active role in our business. Acting as a mentor also reinforced the importance of this programme and the need for AMEC to have a place where delegate's expectations can be expressed."

From its inception in 1993 to date, The Executive Development Programme, now the Accelerator Programme, has been rolled out across the whole of AMEC Group Limited's' business . Such was the recognition by the company of the benefits in developing key managers, the programme now takes 36 individuals a year in two phased intakes, with one delegate from AMEC's North American operation having successfully completed the programme.

Over 50% of previous delegates now hold senior management positions within the organisation, including several operations directors, commercial directors and engineering managers.

Steve Walden, who as an in-house coach and AMEC's course director has been working in partnership with Coverdale since 1999 in the continuing delivery and development of the programme, commented :

"With its proven track record in management consultancy, Coverdale was a good choice for AMEC. To my mind, the success of EDP and Accelerator has been based largely on the choice of consultants who developed the programme and the ongoing working partnership that exists between us. Through their effective listening, expert learning design skills and genuine understanding of our needs, they have helped us, and continue to help us, achieve all of our criteria for the success of the programme".

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