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EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

 **ARCADIS**

CASE STUDY – CUSTOM PROGRAM

Developing global leaders using a blended learning approach

Client: Arcadis – Middle East
Sector: Design & Consultancy
Initiative: Emerging and Accelerated Leadership Programs
Overview: An 18 month High Potential Development Program delivered in the Middle East using a blended learning approach.

A ‘happily married’ partnership between Arcadis and Ashridge Executive Education in which participants experience an innovatively led blended learning program providing them the skills and confidence to lead more effectively.

Background

Arcadis acquired EC Harris International and Hyder Consulting in 2011 and 2014 respectively, and in September 2015 formed a single brand: Arcadis. An adaptive and innovative approach was required to bring the best ideas and expertise to clients and facilitate knowledge transfer and the sharing of best practices.

Neil McArthur, CEO of Arcadis explains the importance and purpose of the single brand as, “bringing our people together to realize our passion for improving quality of life and being recognized as the best”.

Inquiry and consultation

Arcadis’ headcount in the Middle East had tripled since 2014. Recognizing the diversity of both organizations, alignment of culture was a key strategic focus area. Arcadis were looking to create a program which brings together regional leadership expertise using a range of learning formats that presented participants with many dynamics.

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Arcadis' requirements of a partner included:

- Understanding of the Arcadis language
- Continuing insight into Arcadis as they changed and evolved
- A regional Middle East presence to collaborate closely with and who could co-design the program in line with the challenges faced in a vibrant and competitive Middle East market.

The Arcadis Middle East offices are across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman and Qatar and the same quality output was required regardless of where people are based.

Flexibility was key. Sarah Siddique, Head of Talent, Learning and Development, at Arcadis Middle East said, "Our consultants are fully occupied with clients. The program needed to feed into their busy jobs."

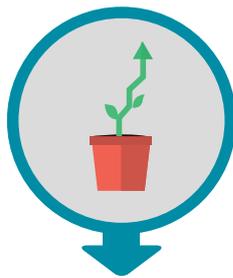
The program and approach

The program included two groups:

1. Emerging Leaders with 3 to 8 years' experience
2. Advanced Leaders with 8 to 12 years' experience

The two groups combined to form one program, with separate project work to reflect the stage in their individual career and development.

The program comprises three themes:



Delivering Sustainable Growth

(Developing strategy and executing and delivering client outcomes)



Creating Leadership Legacies

(Leading and inspiring and realizing people's potential)



Leveraging our Values

(Role modeling or values and collaborating)

The program is delivered by global Ashridge faculty through monthly, online masterclasses. These masterclasses are supported by action learning sets facilitated by regional Ashridge coaches. The purpose of the action learning is for participants to take their learning from the masterclasses and apply it directly into their current business-reality and receive support and challenge from their colleagues.

Each program theme includes one highly experiential and pragmatic face-to-face event. Participants absorb, consume and digest content during the online masterclasses and through Virtual Ashridge. The face-to-face activity aims to bring the competencies and behaviors to life through real experience. "We wanted to make the most out of the time when participants come together and provide them the opportunity to play with new ideas," said Alex Davda, Client Director.

The partnership seeks to achieve a long term shift in thinking and to accelerate development. The program needed to incorporate online facilitated sessions, 24/7 access to digital content and face-to-face sessions to embed learning through collective experience.

Arcadis implemented bite-sized learning recognizing that it would not provide short term bursts in confidence, but instead would create sustainable incremental gains that are simultaneously transferred into the participant's normal work.

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“We are absolutely delighted with what you do – our relationship will definitely grow”

Sarah Siddique
Regional Head of Talent, Learning and Development, Arcadis

The impact

The program is in its first year so the level of impact on the organization is emerging.

The presence of the Arcadis CEO and senior leaders at times within the program provided a statement as to how significant the program is to the business.

The output of the completed projects has been incredibly positive and participants have embraced connecting work to other areas of the business.

The use of a blended approach has seen Arcadis embrace the need to be innovative and enhance their knowledge sharing across the region. Sarah Siddique said, “It has been an amazing journey to pilot different technology and support our agenda further in using technology in optimal ways.”

The future

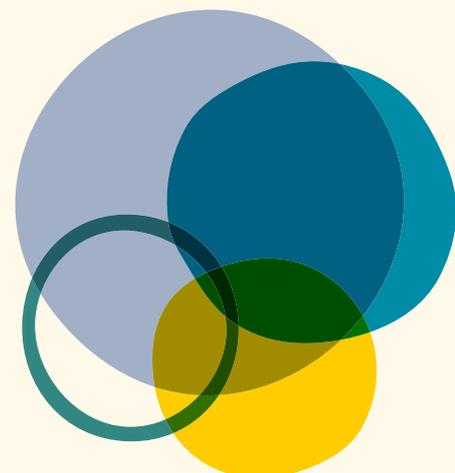
The Arcadis professional environment has changed a lot and will continue to change. With the introduction of new program groups, Arcadis aims to use the scalability of the program to reach more people. Although the participants are regionally based, work will be done to develop the program to support global mobility.

The first group of program participants will promote and familiarize others within Arcadis with the program.

Going forward, Arcadis wants to ensure the elements within the program are kept fresh, innovative and relevant.

“The partnership between Ashridge and Arcadis has opened up a lot of creative room to challenge ourselves and get better about what we can do with our talent groups”

Sarah Siddique, Regional Head of Talent, Learning and Development, Arcadis



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