



Enabling global growth

Client: Sinopec Group (China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation)
Essential Leadership Program for Senior Leaders

Ashridge has worked with Sinopec and delivered leadership programs since 2005; so far, over 500 Sinopec senior leaders have completed this program. As a result of being its partner for leadership development, Ashridge has witnessed Sinopec's rapid growth from being the world's 31st largest company by revenue on the Fortune Global 500 in 2005, to becoming number 2 in 2020.

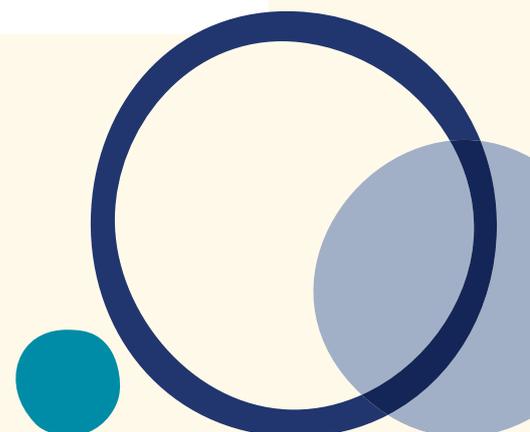
Sinopec: A world leader for better energy for better living

Sinopec is a Chinese state-owned enterprise which was established in 1998. It is one of the world's largest companies with just under one million employees. Sinopec is a vertically integrated energy & chemical company that is engaged in oil & gas exploration and production, as well as the production and distribution of oil and related products.

Accession to the WTO has meant that China needed to open up its markets to international competitors, and this meant that Chinese companies like Sinopec had to compete on equal terms with global companies. The key challenges facing Sinopec's leadership were how to enhance its management competencies and become competitive both domestically and globally. It was in this context that Sinopec decided to invest in their executive leadership development program outside China. After visiting a number of European and North American Business Schools, Ashridge was chosen because of its ability to really customize the program in every respect.

“Sinopec and Ashridge have had good cooperation since 2005. In particular, since 2018, we have continuously sent ten cohorts of middle and senior managers to Ashridge for executive training. Many participants have shared their feedback that training at Ashridge has been a valuable and wonderful experience.”

Wang An, Vice President, Human Resources Division, Sinopec Group



Essential Leadership Program

Having enabled senior leaders to implement a globalization strategy in the early 2000s, Ashridge worked closely with the Sinopec Group HR Director and designed and delivered the 8-week Executive Business and Leadership Program from 2005 for nine cohorts. In the 2010s, along with the increasingly important role Sinopec plays in the global arena, the new generation of senior leaders needed to be more entrepreneurial, and to lead diverse teams focused on innovation. So in 2018, Ashridge designed and delivered the first of our annual 2-week Essential Leadership Programs for Sinopec Senior Leaders.

The Essential Leadership Program is designed to inspire and develop an entrepreneurial spirit within senior leaders. It is constructed along the three main themes of Leadership Skills, Strategic Thinking and Innovative Culture with the intention to:

- Develop strategic thinking
- Develop leadership competencies
- Develop their ability to understand and lead change
- Understand the global business environment
- Build a culture that enables innovation



There are 25 participants per cohort in the program consisting of Sinopec's top management team, mainly Presidents and Vice Presidents of the various Strategic Business Units throughout China. The program is highly customized including content and case studies tailored to Sinopec's needs, bilingual handouts, simultaneous interpretation in the classroom, the provision of Chinese food, and cultural visits with Chinese guides provided for these delegations.

The participants are challenged not only by the content of the program, but also by Ashridge's uniquely interactive style of learning, involving experiential exercises and time for reflection. One of the novel learning experiences for the group is a module entitled 'Leading In Uncertainty', illustrated by experiencing sailing in the English Channel or rowing in Oxford. This provides a dynamic and challenging experience for participants.



“My experience at Ashridge can only be described as excellent. When compared to other training programs I have attended, I have benefited enormously from experiential learning which helped me improve my leadership and management skills. Ashridge was first-class in teaching, understanding our major needs, as well as in its service and administrative support.”

Guanquan Du, Vice President, Sinopec Research Institute of Petrochemical Technology

A full day on the water is used as an effective metaphor for leading and running a complex organization. Sailing and rowing highlight the integrated nature of strategy, change and leadership and the need to lead and operate as high performing teams more effectively during times of uncertainty.

Impact

Ashridge’s close understanding of Sinopec, its business and strategic challenges and our empathy with the Chinese culture has led to very positive feedback on the program.

Program evaluations have averaged 4.8 out of 5 for ten cohorts in 2018 and 2019.

In terms of the impact which the programs have on individuals, a few months after attending this program, Wenbiao Zhong has been promoted to the President of Corporate Governance division and gave some feedback: “I really benefitted enormously from the program that equipped me with relevant and effective leadership skills, and I am now in good shape to embark a new challenge.”

“I have been working closely with Sinopec for 15 years to design and deliver programs. One of the unique benefits of our approach at Ashridge is that the faculty engages with the client throughout the entire process, including the first client meeting, inquiry interviews, program design, delivery, and post-program review. Furthermore, our delivery team have an acute awareness of cultural differences and make sure to keep the content updated in response to industrial trends and the client’s changing needs. The client really appreciates our unique approach, which integrates consulting with executive education. It has been my great pleasure and the most challenging and exciting endeavour in my career.”

Professor Barbara Wang, Program Director, Associate Dean for China Initiatives

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