

Understanding

MBS worked in collaboration with AI-Futtaim subject specialists to devise the Retail Executive Masterclass (REM), a fully bespoke programme that focuses on application and impact.

Design

"What we have really enjoyed about working with MBS was the ability to customise the content of the programme to what we wanted to achieve. We could have purchased an off-the-shelf product, but by helping to shape the programme, we could ensure that it has a direct impact on our business." Fernando Casadevall, Group HR Director, AI-Futtaim Group

Teaching

Delivered across five months, the modules encourage delegates to develop a deep understanding of themselves as leaders, identifying the abilities they need to lead the company towards growth, before introducing them to the latest thinking around international retail strategy and organisational theory.

Continuation

In 2013, the programme was expanded to integrate newly acquired brands Guess, Espirit, Royal Sporting House and F&F. To date over 70 of AFR's senior leaders and directors have been through the programme.

Support

The innovative, blended learning programme consists of three modules, delivered over three-day residential workshops, and is supported by a bespoke virtual learning environment giving 24/7 access to resources and a platform for delegates to talk and collaborate, before, during and after the programme.

From issue to impact: Developing senior leaders and achieving growth targets in the retail sector



AI-Futtaim Group

One of largest and most successful organisations in the UAE, with over 11,500 employees across 827 stores in 17 countries. They boast high profile franchises including Toys R Us, Ikea and Marks and Spencer and dominate markets in the Middle East and North African regions.

The Issue

In 2012, AI-Futtaim Retail (AFR) announced a five year plan to double its retail operations. With 24 individual retail franchises, as well as 13 of their own retail brands, AFR tended to work as a collection of individual businesses, each developing their own growth strategies independently with little or no opportunities or incentives to interact or share best practice. The heads of each franchise are responsible not only to AI-Futtaim but also to their 'parent brand', which increased bureaucracy and made creating a cohesive strategy for the Group problematic. There was also Group-wide complacency towards understanding AI-Futtaim's diverse customer base and a lack of social media presence.

The Learning Journey (pictured)

To achieve their planned growth targets, AI Futtaim needed to develop a culture of customer service, knowledge sharing and consistency across the Retail Division, and equip senior management with best in class strategic retail leadership capabilities to take the organisation forward.

The Impact

- Many of the projects have been implemented, ensuring the programme has tangible impact and giving the delegates a genuine stake in AFR's overall strategy. One project, looking at ways to address logistical issues associated with new store openings, has improved opening times by 10% with a predicted saving of 100 million dirhams by 2017. These savings alone have the potential to pay for the first two cycles of the programme 50 times over.
- Collaborative work and cross brand knowledge sharing is now becoming standard practice.
- Delegates are using a range of tools introduced on the programme in their day-to-day roles, in applied project work and the business planning cycle.
- A clear customer focus is emerging across all brands.
- Delegates are much more willing to innovate and take risks.



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