

# Developing high potentials

## Vlerick prepares future leaders for AGC Flat Glass

When AGC defined its vision to include innovation, it meant innovation in every area of the company and at all levels. Innovation within their management was no exception and AGC Europe quickly recognised that its talented managers would benefit from a programme aimed specifically at facilitating the transition from being an efficient manager to being an effective manager. Similarly, AGC Flat Glass in Russia realised that its young high potentials needed a programme that would give them a strong grounding in business skills and develop their personal leadership. This resulted in collaboration with Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School to provide the AGC-European University Programme for its talented managers in the European region, including Russia, and the Optimising Management Potential Programme for young high potentials from its Russian branch.



25 young high potentials at AGC's Russian branch ready to optimise their talent

### Management toolbox

Alexandre Segers, responsible for company-specific programmes at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School, worked on the development of the management programme for Europe. "The AGC European University Programme has been set up to prepare talented AGC managers in the European region, including Russia, for higher positions," he explains. "It equips them with a management toolbox to develop and run their business activities while considering the impact of their actions on the AGC Group. In general, the programme aims at sharpening their strategic mindset and strengthens the

leadership capabilities needed for fast and appropriate action within an international organisation." It works on the assumption that people in middle management already have leadership experience and skills. The programme for AGC in Russia, however, is aimed at young high potentials who do not yet have a broad background in the management field or have not studied management.

### Optimising management potential

"The collaboration with AGC Flat Glass in Russia stems from the relationship with AGC in Western Europe," says Kristi Valentine, Business Development Manager

### AGC Flat Glass

AGC Flat Glass is a world leader in glass manufacturing, producing glass for roofs and façades, interior design, car windscreens and sunroofs, solar panels, household and industrial appliances, and displays. The company's European headquarters are in Brussels and it has some of its largest production plants in St Petersburg.

#### Info

[www.AGC-flatglass.com](http://www.AGC-flatglass.com)

“Through innovation and operational excellence we will shape the future of glass and be recognised as the European leader in providing the community with innovative and affordable solutions to improve people's everyday life”

(Executive Committee, AGC Flat Glass Europe)

at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. “They were looking for a corporate partner that would help them develop their talent force.” They needed a programme that would teach the fundamentals of management along with leadership styles and skills. “Their people are very well qualified,” explains Valentine. “They have a highly technical mindset and are so skilled in their specialised field, but needed to develop their skills in other areas.” As such the programme includes an individual coaching trajectory where the participants’ strengths and growth potential are transformed into concrete action plans for their further development. There are coaching sessions given between modules and they have continual individual support from a Vlerick coach and an internal AGC coach throughout the duration of the programme. What’s more, the course curriculum includes topics such as leadership skills, team-building, professional communication, negotiation and conflict management, leading projects creatively and making a strategy work.

By providing the personal coaching element, the course also acts as an inducement for employees to stay with the company. Many organisations in Russia experience a relatively high turnover of personnel and company-specific, personalised training is considered an innovative concept that can help increase loyalty. With this programme, AGC is showing its willingness to invest in its people. It is looking to the future, finding people who want to grow with the company and providing them with the means to broaden their scope and venture beyond the immediate boundaries of the job they were initially trained to do.

**Building relationships**

As far as Vlerick is concerned, the programme is also a means of strengthening its association with AGC. “Being able to further our relationship in Russia has reinforced the partnership and trust already established in Western Europe,” says Valentine. “We don’t want to just have programmes, we want to build

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relationships. Our aim is to be the educational provider for organisations. When they come to us, we want to be able to say yes, we can assess your organisation, advise you and provide you with the support you need to make you more

effective, to make you more efficient and to make you a leader in your business unit or sector.”

This is a prime example of a relationship in equilibrium. Vlerick provides the learning environment, AGC provides the practical application. “Working with companies helps our professors further their research,” says Valentine. “It puts their theories to the test and in this case helps them identify any differences between Russia and Western Europe and understand what those differences may be. It can create a learning experience for the professors that can be reflected in their lectures.”

**One Vlerick, one AGC**

Although the programme has been developed purely for AGC’s young Russian talent, it partly takes place in Belgium. This, in itself, provides a fantastic opportunity for the participants to learn more about international management and team skills in practice and, of course, to network within the organisation. “AGC headquarters in Brussels acts as their host and guest speakers from the company are involved in the programme,” says Valentine. It enables the company to create a sense of unity. “We always say we’re one Vlerick to the customer, whether you’re in Ghent, Leuven or St Petersburg,” says Valentine. “But in this way AGC is also one company to us.” ■



Teambuilding at the Optimising Management Potential Programme’s kick-off session

**Optimising Management Potential Programme**

- Launched in July 2008 (to be finalised in June 2009)
- Location: Vlerick’s St Petersburg Campus – Vlerick’s Ghent Campus
- Number of participants: 25
- Target audience: young high potentials

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