



BG Group | Cranfield University School of Management

# Exploring Leadership

BG GROUP



*Cranfield*  
UNIVERSITY  
School of Management

# Executive Summary

BG Group partnered with the Centre for Customised Executive Development (CCED) within the Cranfield School of Management to co-design and deliver Exploring Leadership, a development intervention unlike any that the organisation had experienced before. Making this challenging, innovative and counter-cultural programme a reality demanded courage on part of the organisations and individual stakeholders and continued engagement and collaboration within the partnership.

In the context of the deepest sector downturn since the 1990s, BG Group turned it's successful entrepreneurial culture towards how it would address this paradigmatic

change coupled with radical uncertainty. The response of BG Group was to invest in a Learning & Development initiative that would:

- » Enhance the capability of senior and mid-level managers to deliver strategy in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous (VUCA) environment
- » Facilitate in individuals an understanding of their own leadership values, motivation, approach, and impact
- » Facilitate an emergent common understanding of what good leadership looks like within BG Group

The programme followed principles jointly agreed upon by the partnership:

- » Customisation down to the individual while delivering capability uplift across the whole population
- » A pull (versus push) approach to learning
- » Engagement of the whole person: not just the intellectual, but also the emotional and the visceral
- » Sustainability: support application of learning and follow-through on commitments



Programme Overview



Exploring Leadership is a three-module programme that integrates the outdoors, coaching, facilitated and self-directed learning activities over a six-month period. A distinctive feature is an individual retreat in nature which, according to delegates, offered an unparalleled opportunity for self-reflection. In total, the programme was delivered at three international hubs to 13 cohorts and 300 participants.

The programme was well received and highly rated and worked well as a catalyst of powerful change for a population of high-talent managers. The evaluation study found impact spanning:

- » The individual level: personal leadership (self-awareness, reflective practice, confidence to lead)
- » The population level: a support system of networked relationships
- » The organisational level: improved talent development, leadership culture, and performance

In addition, the approach of this programme has been sending a strong signal to the wider organisation as to how to support the development of leadership in a fluid and emergent context.

In April 2015, just as the second cohort was underway, the announcement that Shell would acquire BG Group was made. The acquisition process was going to take several months and bring about leadership transitions—to start with BG Group’s CEO Helge Lund, who had joined BG Group two months earlier, would eventually step down. The easy option would have been to discontinue Exploring Leadership. However, the programme was already proving itself through its impact. BG Group decided to adhere to the roll-out schedule; and, to extend the programme to a cohort of senior leaders.

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*The results are demonstrating a lasting impact at an individual and business level with leaders across all facets of our business better connected and with clarity of focus on their role and what is most important. At a time where our commodity price has fallen by 60%, our leaders are excited by the challenge and confident in their tools to meet the demands of change, innovation and business delivery. 2015 has seen our best year for safety and our highest production performance on record. We continue to set new records into 2016 and this has been during our most challenging economic environment. There is a clear and palpable correlation between our performance and the leadership potential we have liberated with our Exploring Leadership immersion.*

**Jon Harris**

Executive Vice President, BG Technical, BG Group