COFFEE BREAK WITH THE LEADERS

BEATE SKJERVEN NYGARDSHAUG

Kistefos AS

IMD

Chemin de Bellerive 23
PO Box 915,
CH-1001 Lausanne
Switzerland
Tel:  +41 21 618 01 11
Fax:  +41 21 618 07 07
info@imd.ch
http://www.imd.ch
Beate Skjerven Nygardshaug

Company: Kistefos AS

Company description: Kistefos AS is a Norwegian Investment Company with substantial investments within offshore, shipping, real estate, finance and IT/telecom. Kistefos’ investment strategy is based on long term value creation through active ownership. The company is owned by Christen Sveaas and is under the leadership of Managing Director Åge Korsvold.

Position: Head of Legal Affairs

Nationality: Norwegian

In a nutshell: Beate is a young executive on the rise. The 33 year old was recently listed as one of the 100 most promising young business leaders in Norway. She just finished the IMD Program for Executive Development and is planning to build on this in order to complete her EMBA at IMD. In her spare time, Beate enjoys windsurfing, yoga, skiing, culture and nature. In addition to her “day” job, she also is a fitness instructor in her spare time.

What is your greatest skill?
My core competence is the combination of my knowledge of corporate law and my understanding of business. I have been fortunate in that in my young career I have already been exposed to a variety of businesses. Having so many various experiences has certainly been an asset for me.

What is the best decision you ever made in your career?
My career choices. I’m a curious person and rather than follow a traditional career path, I’ve chosen experiences that allowed me to learn and explore new areas. This has meant that I’ve been privileged to work with leaders that have inspired and supported me.

What is the most difficult decision you ever had to make in business?
For me the toughest decisions are the ones that negatively affect or separate you from things you care about, such as your loved ones, colleagues, but also projects or companies you are passionate about.

What is the best advice you ever received?
This is a difficult question as I tend to collect lots of advice. But one piece of advice that I try to follow every day came from my first boss who advised me to do a good job, to contribute and be positive every day.

What is the best way to motivate your team?
Involve, challenge and empower people. It’s important to look for opportunities to develop people’s potential as this will benefit both the employee and the company. It’s important to give recognition for success, whether it’s big or small.

In your estimation, what is the most common mistake business leaders make today?
Some leaders focus on competitors, rather than identifying and developing their company’s own core competence to meet the market. Another mistake is to neglect people’s potential and development – the best leaders are not the ones with most followers, but the ones who create the most leaders.
In brief, what does innovation mean for you in your industry?
Innovation is crucial in order to create value and stay ahead. Kistefos and our portfolio companies work on value creation in areas such as technology, products, processes and business models. In a complex world, innovation is often about making things simpler.

What does collaboration mean for you in your industry?
You need good internal collaboration to ensure efficient processes, spark innovation and unlock hidden value. Collaboration with external stakeholders helps create long term value. For me personally, collaboration means fun and motivation as I love working with people on common goals.

What three words would you use to describe IMD?
For me, there are two themes that instantly come to mind, three words each:

- Broadens your mind
- Stretches your borders

IMD is a world class business school with amazing participants and professors. It makes you question things more and gives you a truly global perspective. It also gives you the confidence, tools and network to make things possible.