



Amrop



Amrop

How a global executive search firm partnered with a business school to reinforce its strategic positioning

The Trusted Advisor program helped Amrop see the world their client sees and understand their client business as well as they possibly could. Amrop is a case study in how a professional service firm can stretch their partners towards ever higher levels of advisorship, further positioning the company for long-term success.

Overview

Context

Amrop was seeking to consolidate its position as a trusted provider of senior executive search and leadership services. To do so, Amrop partners and consultants needed to refine their ability to conduct strategic dialogues with board-level executives. The Trusted Advisor program, was designed to address this need.

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Challenge

“In recruiting at the C-suite level, our partners have to deeply understand the constantly-evolving challenges of executives on the other side,” explains Amrop Chairman. “The partners have to be able to fully explore the thinking of C-suite executives, and what is important to them individually and to their organizations.”

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Custom approach

IMD provided concrete meaning to the definition of the trusted advisor. Trust is linked to behaviors, while advisorship relates to knowledge and skills. Integrating both traditional and innovative learning approaches, the IMD program focused on both elements and provided content synthesizing all the pieces of the trusted advisor equation. [Page 5](#)

Impact

Amrop chairman reports: “Since our partnership with IMD, we have a better understanding of our goals. The IMD program learnings have contributed to an increasing number of assignments at the C-suite level and a change of mindset within our organization. We have become more of a learning organization and have strengthened Amrop’s global network.” [Page 6](#)

Context



“It was one of the best decisions we have ever made as a company.” This is how Ulrich Dade, Chairman of global executive search firm Amrop, summarizes his company’s decision to partner with IMD to create the Trusted Advisor Program for Amrop’s partners. His words of praise are based on the impact he has seen from the program, specifically the way it reinforces the firm’s positioning as trusted advisor to the C-suite.

The trusted advisor

Amrop sought to consolidate its position as a trusted provider of senior executive search and leadership services, and strengthen its long-term sustainability, according to Dade. It was therefore crucial that Amrop’s partners and consultants constantly refine their ability to conduct strategic dialogues with board-level executives. The Trusted Advisor program, was designed to address this need.



Challenge

“In recruiting at the C-suite level, our partners have to deeply understand the constantly-evolving challenges of executives on the other side,” Dade explained. “The partners have to be able to fully explore the thinking of C-suite executives, and what is important to them individually and to their organizations. In this respect the program has been extremely helpful.”

“In our aspiration to be a trusted advisor, we thought it was important to partner with a school of higher learning,” added Tomasz Magda, an Amrop partner and board member. “We needed to work with an organization that had a great reputation and would have the flexibility to meet our unique challenges. IMD was the logical choice.”

Custom approach

The partnership with IMD was a cornerstone to the recently-launched Amrop University. IMD faculty designed the program, in collaboration with Amrop senior partners, to bring context to the trusted advisor concept, using both theory and practice. They used traditional and innovative approaches, including an exercise in which IMD professors and visiting executives, all with board-level credentials, led a role-play that pushed Amrop partners to respond to one of five different problem scenarios.

“The term ‘trusted advisor’ is a buzzword in the industry,” explained Costa Tzavaras, Amrop’s Knowledge Manager and a former participant. “The program provided concrete meaning to the definition of the trusted advisor.” For Tzavaras, trust is linked to behaviors, while advisorship relates to knowledge and skills.

The IMD program focuses on both elements and provides content synthesizing all the pieces of the trusted advisor equation. “The program emphasized the importance of bringing the human element back into our business,” he said. “It is not a transactional process only - it is a matter of the trust factor, interpersonal relationships and leadership. We were already aware of this, but the program helped turn up the volume added Magda, an Amrop partner and board member. “The program has helped us take a broader perspective. It has been key to helping us see through CEOs’ eyes to understand their challenges and issues.”



Impact

Results from the classroom

For Dade, the results can be linked to two key areas: the percentage of work Amrop is conducting with the C-suite and the internal understanding of the firm's key priorities. "Since our partnership with IMD, there is better understanding of our goals," he said. "The IMD program learnings have contributed to an increasing number of assignments at the C-suite level and a change of mindset within our organization." Dade is also seeing a new approach in how partners deal with C-suite clients: "Our partners are taking a different approach and a broader perspective. They are not only placing even more candidates, but also more deeply understanding the clients' respective businesses. This has been appreciated by our clients."

Magda recounted several examples of participant successes from the program, ranging from personal development to the way they interact individually with clients. "Some of our people have told me that they are able to take conversations to a whole new level as the result of the program," he said. "But most importantly we have become a learning organization." The program has also helped strengthen Amrop's global network. The firm has 84 offices in 56 countries.

"IMD has helped reinforce the message within our organization that there is no end for learning," said Dade. Tzavaras remarked that "the IMD program strengthened the global network while honoring the significant local knowledge of our diverse membership."



A research partnership

The partnership between IMD and Amrop has extended beyond the classroom walls. The two organizations are working together on a robust field research project that will provide insights into key aspects of Amrop's markets. Preeti Kumar, a Managing Partner and Member of the Executive Board at Amrop, had conducted smaller scale research projects in India. She proposed that Amrop replicate this at the global level. Drawing on the successful collaboration of the Trusted Advisor Program, Amrop approached IMD to propose a research partnership.

IMD faculty have taken the lead in designing the research framework, while Amrop's senior partners are conducting the interviews. "We wanted to provide additional value to our clients by providing more thought leadership on their markets," said Amrop's Communications and

Content Manager Steffi Gande, who is working closely with Kumar and with IMD in the design and leadership of the project. "In order to do this, we are talking with them in a structured way through this research collaboration. It goes beyond hypothesis and intuition and gives us a clear picture about what is happening."

Extensive training has been provided to the interviewing partners through toolkits, troubleshooting reference guides and a webinar conducted by IMD faculty. The internal feedback from the partners has been consistently positive, according to Gande. "People very quickly understood the objectives and methodology of the project," she said. "Our collaboration with IMD helped provide robustness and validity. All the players involved in the project have found it highly enriching. It's been a mutually beneficial initiative for all stakeholders involved." Interviews are currently being conducted across geographical regions.



Lessons

Magda admits that running an executive education program for an organization as diverse as Amrop is not a simple task. In fact, Amrop had never conducted executive training across the entire organization. Working with IMD throughout the process has provided invaluable lessons.

“Just dealing with IMD was a learning experience for me,” he said. “We worked with him as we would a professional services consultant. The IMD approach is truly client focused. There was no bureaucracy and I was surprised by the degree of flexibility.”

IMD wasn't the sole source of learning - the participants also engaged in intensive peer knowledge exchange, said Dade. Magda noted that “when we bring in diverse groups of 30 or so partners, we are able to confront issues in a unified setting. There is a great value in bringing us out of our daily work and into a new environment with the goal to learn.” “The trusted advisor is not only about how you interact with your client,” concluded IMD professor Maury Peiperl. “It is also about seeing the world your client sees and understanding their business as well as you possibly can. Amrop is a case study in how a professional service firm can stretch their partners towards ever higher levels of advisorship, further positioning the company for long-term success.”





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Ulrich Dade
Chairman
AMROP



Develop your people, transform your organization

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Your journey

IMD can partner with you at every step

Are you looking to develop the individual capabilities of your people in areas critical for growth? Or are you considering a deeper organizational transformation, where you question the very purpose of your business?

Whatever your aspirations and needs may be, we can develop fully customized programs for you that reflect the opportunities and challenges of your organization.

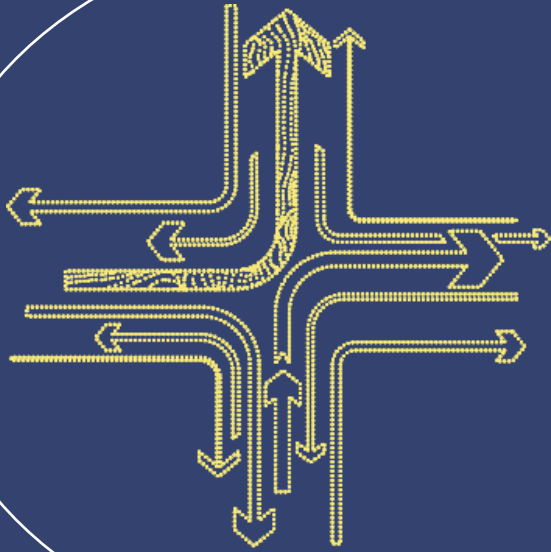
Working closely with our world-class faculty from day one, you will design together learning solutions that meet your unique objectives and deliver the highest impact.

Context

You gain a clear understanding of the objectives you want to achieve as an organization.

You develop new insights on your business as we challenge your assumptions, reframe your perspectives and uncover new growth areas and blindspots. Together, we define what success should look like as we co-design your learning journey.





Transformation

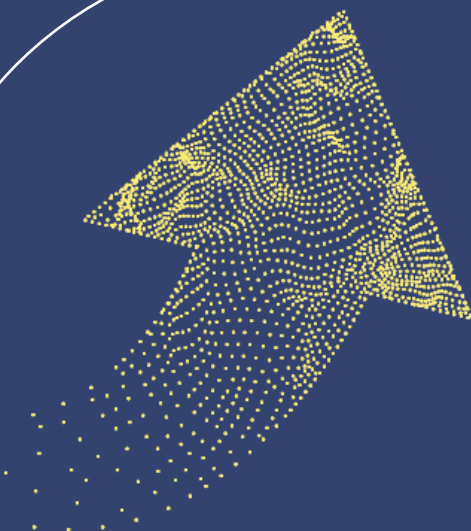
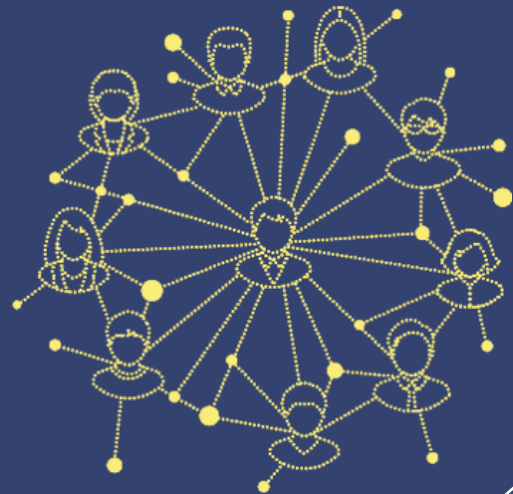
You build the case for change and a detailed action plan associated with key areas of choice.

You explore and identify alternative directions in which leaders could take the business, and specific areas of choice moving forward. You build an aligned view of what it will take to be successful in the future and reshape your organization's strategic, organizational and leadership agenda accordingly.

Capabilities

You develop the capabilities of your people in areas critical to your future success.

You empower your people to realize your organization's ambition by developing their capabilities in areas such as strategy, innovation, leadership and change management. The top team cannot succeed alone. You energize and align your people around a shared commitment moving forward.



Impact

You create lasting impact as your organization sets out to lead and drive change.

What you learned and created at IMD becomes ingrained deep into your organization. You embed new ways of working and foster an agile organizational culture ready to embrace the future. We allocate time, resources and processes to facilitate and track your implementation progress.



IMD is ranked **1st**
in open programs worldwide
Financial Times 2012– 2016.



The IMD Difference

IMD is a top-ranked business school.
We are the experts in developing global leaders
through high-impact executive education.

Why IMD ?

- » We are 100% focused on real-world executive development
- » We offer Swiss excellence with a global perspective
- » We have a flexible, customized and effective approach

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