

NAME OF THE INITIATIVE:

TCS and INSEAD: Transform and Grow – “Ablaze” and “Arise”



AWARD CATEGORY:

TBC

Context/Problem

A global IT consultancy, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), embarked on a mission to reshape itself from a service and technology provider into a strategic transformation partner for its clients. The organisation’s talent development team embarked on a one-of-a-kind initiative to train “growth and transformation leaders” from within.

INSEAD co-designed an innovative programme based on TCS’s comprehensive analysis of the 16 key traits required by growth and transformation leaders.



Ideation

In 2020, TCS was at an inflexion point, transitioning from being a preferred technology partner to becoming the strategic partner of choice for its clients. TCS had to become a catalyst for change and sustainability in every business sector it served. And, much more than IT consultants, its people had to become growth and transformation professionals with a whole new mindset geared towards business growth and transformation.

TCS consultants increasingly found themselves with the entire C-suite. They had to learn new presentation and listening skills. In addition, they had to exchange their old technical language for a new strategic discourse.

This is where INSEAD came in.

Implementation

Between December 2020 and April 2022, INSEAD and its handpicked team of alumni delivered Ablaze to 11 cohorts of 120 TCS leaders. Arise ran in parallel and each cohort took around 3 months to complete the programme.

TCS sought nominations from its senior managers globally. Nominees then underwent psychometric testing based and a business acumen simulation to determine their suitability.

With Ablaze, 120 participants attended 11 half-day sessions and with Arise, participants were invited to submit project ideas 25 of which were selected by the TCS G&T team and INSEAD coaches.

Impact (results)

The first 15% of participants alone delivered a return that was over 3 times the training investment. In addition, participant tracking reveals that around 73% of participants have already moved into growth and transformation deployments. Retention rates among participants are also up by around 25%. Finally, the programme exceeded its own ambitious target of 1,200 participants and reached 1,320 TCS leaders within the original timeframe envisaged.

Graduates of Ablaze and Arise no longer rush into selling their services. Rather than jumping straight to the claim, “We can do this!”, they listen, research and understand the client’s “pain points” – and tailor their proposals accordingly.



Innovation

The initiative on ARISE & ABLAZE led the participants to uncover new ways of dealing with complex clients and to win non-traditional businesses which were more of the ‘upstream technology consulting type’! This was possible due to the new ideas, concepts and frameworks taught by INSEAD faculties, lecturers and coaches.



Conclusion

The partnership between TCS and INSEAD is evolving, with a new, concise, still-virtual version of the programme currently being rolled out at lower levels of the hierarchy. “It’s the biggest partnering experience I’ve had in 35 years of educating executives,” says Philip Anderson.

What’s more, Ablaze and Arise were long-term gamechangers in that they proved to both partners that virtual delivery can be as impactful as in-person teaching.

For TCS, the transformation continues. It is no coincidence that it has just been included in Fortune magazine’s list of the World’s Most Admired Companies.