

Management Seminar
Strategy Development



Leading Through Understanding

Metaplan Qualification Program

Understanding and Leading Organizations

**Management
Seminar**
Sept. 10 -12, 2012
Register now!

Understanding and Leading Organizations

What is the seminar about?

We provide a central skill set that will equip you to develop and implement strategies and advise organizations effectively. The key is to understand organizations from a perspective that keeps both the formal structures and the informal, micro-political aspects equally in view.

Who is the target audience?

Executives or consultants who, after several years of professional work experience, are now searching for winning solutions to the tasks they face. These are individuals who want to understand and influence the strategic path of their organization in significant ways and seek methods that outperform those presented in MBA programs.



Who would benefit from it?

Anyone whose experiences in day-to-day business operations or during consulting projects have shown that ...

- ... decisions are reached, but are subsequently not implemented
- ... market factors, business conditions, and collaborative efforts are becoming increasingly complex
- ... change processes can end in failure; projects may produce no results
- ... conflicts often focus on the wrong topics and occur at the wrong interfaces
- ... interdependencies within organizations seem difficult to fathom

Why is the seminar especially important right now?

Strategic decisions are difficult to evaluate, and the terrain is often contested. What we need today are sophisticated approaches that enable managers and consultants to operate even in highly complex situations. If the complexity of a strategic venture does not receive sufficient consideration from the outset, the result can be a backlash during a later phase, for example, during implementation. This is exactly the challenge that our seminar addresses.

What will you take away?

Fresh, novel approaches. The knowledge and skills that will enable you to improve your performance in highly complex environments. An analysis of organizational structures and a systematic method to understand, target, and adjust micro-politics (e.g., stakeholder interests).

The ability to lead your organization by developing strategies that result in communication and cooperation between those involved. Our approach is pragmatic. The seminar is structured in such a way, that you will have the opportunity to present a business case of your own and apply what you have learned. Together with your colleagues and the Metaplan faculty, you will develop a deeper understanding of your case and the underlying issues, for example, your initial situation, core concerns, scope, stakeholder analysis, the development process, the implementation structure, and a road map for moving ahead.

You will be able to develop viable courses of action that will actually be implemented. In other words, your ultimate take-away will be the equipment you need for lasting success as a business executive or consultant.

Strategy Development

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Seminar Content

You will learn a comprehensive, structured method of directing strategies into new channels and shaping them through discourse. This applies not only to the development phase but is also relevant for communicating and implementing them. Our approach involves analyzing commonly used managerial strategy tools and expanding their range of applicability based on a discursive perspective.

Classically, strategies are viewed as economically oriented concepts that result from rational planning. But that falls short. Rather, they represent future courses of action that target not only economic goals but extra-economic ones as well. They take organizational structures, stakeholder interests, power-, and micro-politics into account.

Even the initial phase of strategy development requires communications processes that allow the complexity to be sufficiently captured, something which can only be achieved if the interests of the various functions and executives and their ability to wield power are taken into consideration. Discourse opens up previously inaccessible thought structures, generates new insights, and brings opposing positions closer together. Ensuring a uniform line of action and consistent communications requires a negotiation process.

Yet discourse is also necessary during implementation. If one is to avoid the execution trap, one must provide those who are needed for the implementation with a forum where they can air their differences. Structured discourse ensures that they buy into the strategy and participate.



Faculty

Metaplan Quickborn, Germany



Dr. Thomas Schnelle
Managing Partner

Dr. Thomas Schnelle joined Metaplan in 1987. Today, he is Managing Partner of Metaplan Quickborn. His expertise includes strategic planning processes and organizational design in the areas of marketing and sales. His activities often involve clients in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, while his “avocation” is advising family-owned companies, other consulting firms, and associations. Prior to joining Metaplan, he worked as a shipyard production manager. He studied industrial sociology, political economy, and epistemology at the universities of Bielefeld, Manchester, Warsaw, and Hamburg.

Metaplan Quickborn, Germany



Dr. Kai Matthiesen
Managing Partner

Dr. Kai Matthiesen joined Metaplan in 2001, and has since become a Managing Partner of Metaplan Quickborn. His areas of expertise include the development of strategies and mission statements, organizational design, and brand-related issues; particularly for the media, family-owned companies, and the consumer and luxury goods industry. He is also a lecturer at the University of St. Gallen. Prior to joining Metaplan, he was Managing Director of Alta Vista Germany. He has also held several management positions at family-owned businesses and at Bertelsmann AG. His consulting career began at Booz Allen Hamilton. He studied business administration at the University of Passau and completed a Ph.D. in business ethics at the University of St. Gallen.

Metaplan Princeton, USA



Franz-Josef Tillmann
Managing Partner

Franz-Josef Tillmann has been Managing Partner of Metaplan Princeton since 2001. His areas of expertise include strategic planning processes, lateral leadership, and market exploration, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry. Prior to joining Metaplan, he served as Director, Global Strategic Marketing at Johnson & Johnson. He also held a number of management positions in marketing and sales at Schwarz Pharma in Germany and the United States. He holds a degree in geography from the University of Bayreuth and an MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business.

Metaplan Versailles, France



Michel Borcier
Managing Partner

Michel Borcier has been Managing Partner of Metaplan Versailles since 1994. His areas of expertise include strategic planning processes, organizational consulting, and market exploration, particularly for the pharmaceutical industry, retail chains (Grande Distribution, Vente à Distance), and the luxury goods sector. Prior to joining Metaplan, he worked as a business journalist. He studied political science and economics at the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris and foreign languages at the Université Paris X in Nanterre.

The Discursive Approach

In order to provide strategic leadership, we must learn to understand the organization

Organizations follow their own logic. As social systems, they strive to integrate their activities in a way that produces sensible results. Due to the inter-organizational division of labor, each unit is able to specialize, concentrate on its own tasks, and develop its own criteria of professional excellence. This is the driver behind the powerful efficiency of organizations.

Yet at the same time, there are consequences. To begin with, each unit develops its own notion of what is right, sensible, and important. As an example, the head of production will rate a product redevelopment much differently than the person who was responsible for the development itself. The one might object to new product features because they will drive up his production costs. The other will defend the features because, from his perspective, they represent a genuine competitive advantage in the marketplace. Meanwhile, both parties claim to be arguing on behalf of the company's overall welfare. In other words, labor that was once divided is not so easily joined together again. Hierarchy alone is seldom enough to reconcile divergent interests and ways of thinking.

To accomplish their goals, managers and organizational consultants must recognize such opposition, address it, and be equipped to deal with it. They must open closed minds, adjust power equations, and transform distrust into cooperation.



Leading and consulting under increasingly complex conditions

Managing and consulting in today's environment is extremely demanding.

Networking. Never before have professionals, businesses, and economies been as interconnected as they are today. Yet the more a system increases in size or complexity, the less managerial autonomy any given player can command. Projects complement established processes, temporary partners collaborate with staff positions, and external service providers take over tasks formerly performed in-house. Instead of acting simply as line function managers, today's consultants and executives must also orchestrate changing project partners and make allowances for the positions they hold.

Interdependence. In a networked world of real-time interactions, the (long-term) ramifications of decisions are increasingly difficult to judge. Decisions that were presumed to be correct can cause unimaginable damage. Managers and consultants must learn to anticipate and address complex interactions. Across the hierarchy one needs to pool the best minds, the players who are in a position to assess the outcome or who play an important role during the implementation. Working across the hierarchy, they must involve the players who are able to grasp the outcomes of decisions or will fulfill important roles during implementation.

Cooperation. People who must accomplish complex, poorly defined tasks are dependent on collaboration. They must rely on the other players becoming mentally involved and contributing their resources. Since giving orders only works to a limited degree, they need communications processes to make their own interests clear. As well, such communication allows them to incorporate the interests of subordinates and the other participants who would like to contribute to achieving the goal from their respective positions.

Thus, the key to effective organizational design and consulting today no longer lies in directives but rather in discourse.

Leading and consulting using the discursive approach

Organizational change is successful when the parties involved adopt an objective as their own and are willing to collaborate. As a prerequisite, we must understand their ways of thinking and patterns of behavior. This, in turn, can only be achieved through structured encounters that focus on concrete, work-related topics and cause contradictions to come to light. The clarification that is achieved by working through the issues is necessary for arriving at new ways of thinking and setting off in new directions. Subjecting a business initiative to serious doubt is the only way to gain acceptance for it and ensure that it is implemented.

Well-structured discourse is the only way to turn listeners into interested participants who contribute their knowledge, abilities, contacts, and energy. Discourse allows us to enlist co-entrepreneurs who pull their weight instead of covertly (or even overtly) blocking the road. Discourse allows us to form organizations that are more vibrant, forward-looking, and consequently more successful.

Metaplan looks back on 40 years of consulting and leadership using the discursive approach. We help our clients to formulate important questions and discover the right answers through discourse with the relevant stakeholders. We support leaders of complex organizations in their efforts to establish durable agreements and make better decisions in questions of strategy and structure.

The 'strategy development' seminar lets you profit from our experience. We will equip you with our tools, provide critical insight by drawing on concrete challenges from your own professional practice, and thereby enable you to achieve greater success as a manager or consultant.



The seminar at a glance

Present your own challenges and explore solutions

The seminar is structured in such a way, that you will have the opportunity to present a business case of your own and apply what you have learned. Together with your colleagues and the Metaplan faculty, you will develop a deeper understanding of your case and the underlying issues, for example, your initial situation, core concerns, scope, stakeholder analysis, the development process, the implementation structure, and a road map for moving ahead.

How to participate

Admission to the management seminar requires an initial, person-to-person interview. This will allow you to determine whether the program matches your needs and expectations. We, in turn, would like to know more about your professional background and the goals you hope to achieve by participating. Our objective is to bring together a group of personalities who will make a good fit with one another while meeting the demands of the program. Please include your résumé along with your inquiry.

Date and Fees

Dates: September 10 – 12, 2012
 Begins at 10:00AM on Monday; ends at 4:00PM on Wednesday
 Fee: € 2.900 + VAT, includes registration, course materials, and meals. Does not cover accommodations.

Location

Hotel Onyria Marina
 Rua do Clube, 2750-715 Cascais (Lisbon), Portugal

Contact



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Register
 NOW



Metaplan. Pioneering research-based organizational consulting

Metaplan numbers among the pioneers of research-based organizational consulting in Germany. The firm consists of 35 consultants and maintains offices in Germany, France, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. We have been providing project-specific and strategic consulting services for 40 years. Our thrust is leadership and consulting through discourse. This means mastering complex change through a process of structured confrontation and communication between stakeholders. For us, communication means establishing enduring, reliable agreements. It is a pivotal management tool that organizations can use to target specific challenges – in planning, development, and execution.

Our methods have been influenced by five central approaches in the field of organizational research:

- behavioral decision-making theory as advanced by James G. March, Richard M. Cyert, and Herbert A. Simon
- Niklas Luhmann's systems theory
- Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg's theory of power and micro-politics
- Ludwik Fleck's epistemology and sociology of thought
- Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics

At Metaplan, we question the status quo and are driven by a desire to learn. This accounts for our tradition of incorporating the findings of organizational research in our work.

Our clients' primary concern is to design successful strategic, organizational, and cultural transformation. Experience has shown that discursive management and consulting is the approach that enables them to achieve their goals.

Metaplan – Leading Through Understanding

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