



CoachingOurselves Mini-MBA program at Fairfood International

by Mireille Jansma, Consultant, The Netherlands

Dutch consultant Mireille Jansma creates one-day mini-MBA programs for clients using CoachingOurselves. Here is an outline and the results of Jansma's pilot program for Fairfood International.

Introduction:

This training session was based on a conversational development format called CoachingOurselves. CO has been developed by world renowned management thinker Professor Henry Mintzberg and Phil LeNir. The method is used world-wide by both profit and not-for-profit organizations, as well as in Mintzberg's own MBA for Practicing Managers, which he set up as an alternative to more traditional MBA's.

The day was facilitated by Mireille Jansma. She has introduced CO in The Netherlands as part of a 3-day development program for managers, talents, and everyone else with time and a fair amount of curiosity. The aim of these programs was to explore new visions and concepts and to see organizational and societal issues in a different light.



The Program:

10:00-12:30

Navigating Complexity: The importance of Dialogue

Discussion, debate, negotiation, and information exchange are the most common forms of communication in organizations, and although helpful in many ways, they rarely push us beyond our current paradigms of thought and action. The morning focused on dialogue, a more creative and collaborative mode of communication that increases our capacity to address complex organizational and societal issues.



The day started with a bit of theory and some videos on complexity. Participants were introduced to the Cynefin model for decision making in complex environments, learned how complex issues differ from merely simple or complicated ones, what safe-fail experiments are, and why diversity of thinking and dialogue are crucial when dealing with complex issues.

After this, participants were divided into groups and worked through the CO topic "Time to Dialogue". They learned how dialogue differs from other forms of communication and practiced specific behaviors that can help them move towards a more creative and collaborative mode of communication, increasing their capacity to address complex issues.

The morning concluded with a brief plenary conversation on their experiences.

13:30-16:00

Personal Leadership

To embrace the type of leadership the 21st Century most needs, managers must return to their most profound personal perspective, imagination, and wisdom. This session challenged participants to take themselves as seriously as they take the people that they most admire. They learn to grant their own perceptions, ideas, images, feelings, and dreams with the same respect that they give to their most respected leaders.



The session started with a video excursion into the world of music, orchestras, and conductors. An orchestra conductor faces the ultimate leadership challenge: creating perfect harmony without saying a word. Participants watched several great conductors at work, illustrating a crucial lesson for all leaders.

After this, participants divided into groups and worked through the CO topic "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Leadership". This session helped them to identify admirable leadership qualities, reflect on their own strengths and talents, and reclaim their personal leadership skills.

We concluded with a plenary conversation on their experiences and a surprise video.

Results:

"The MiniMBA session hosted by Mireille Jansma was a great experience for us managers, as well as other employees that we supervise. For me it was particularly interesting using CoachingOurselves discussion topics, as this created great insights into the motives behind my colleagues' reasoning and unleashed their capacities. It felt enriching and a true breath of fresh air to apply these dialogue techniques of focusing on the questions, instead of focusing on providing the answers. Already the day after it turned out to be very fruitful to apply in a meeting with directors, in which a complex topic that had led to tough discussions for a while, was suddenly quickly resolved. Highly recommended."

- Marc Bleijenbergh, Manager Advocacy (Research), Fairfood International



"The mini-MBA delivered by Mireille Jansma was a great experience. It made me think of dialogue and discussion in a totally new way. The practical exercise led to a very insightful and inspiring dialogue with colleagues I hardly know. It was very powerful."

- Ainhoa Galan, Manager Advocacy (Communications), Fairfood International

"I very much enjoyed the training day. On the topics, Dialogue and Personal Leadership, the interactive discussions were an eye-opening opportunity to engage, learn, listen and most importantly self-reflect. Mireille also was very enthusiastic and a funny woman"

- Ruksana Devit, HR Administrator, Fairfood International

"The mini MBA was an inspiring means to explore the way people - I - communicate with each other. Ever since, I frequently apply the lessons I learned in my personal as well as my professional life. I realize that having a dialogue is more than talking with one and another. It is about listening and truly understanding what "the other" is saying."

- Kiki van Lieshout, Junior Fundraising, Fairfood International

For more information, contact Warren Cohen at 514-973-3242 or warren@coachingourselves.com and Mireille Jansma at mireillejansma@gmail.com.