

‘Crystal clear, accessible and ready to use’

‘Finance for non-financial managers’ is the name of the in-company programme that Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School has co-developed with Bekaert. It is now offered twice a year and is a standard element in the training plan of management executives and senior project managers at Bekaert from all corners of the globe. Joris De Snoeck, Bekaert’s Group Training & Development Manager, draws up the balance sheet.

How does Management Development contribute to achieving Bekaert’s strategy?

Joris De Snoeck: “Our company has a long-standing tradition of employee career development. Deciding which employees need to have which skills developed is a key question that is crucial to achieving our objectives. For both new recruits and experienced technologists this has resulted in a sound, consistent training plan that is already yielding rich rewards worldwide. On the financial front, however, we felt a certain lack of consistency, which is why we decided in mid-2005 to streamline the various existing programmes.”

Why did you opt for in-company training, and why Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School?

Joris De Snoeck: “We already had an external training package, but it was too general and, at the same time, not flexible enough. A tailor-made solution based on Bekaert’s practical experience was what we really needed. We wanted all members of our management teams not only to be able to follow a financial discussion, but also to ask critical questions and contribute ideas. As far as our senior project managers are concerned, we expect them to underpin their technical expertise with sound financial arguments when they are called upon to formulate a business plan. The main reason we chose Vlerick is their helpful and accessible approach: we know from experience that the School’s lecturers are capable of presenting the subject matter in a clear and attractive way and supporting it with interesting case studies and business games.”

To what extent is the training tailor-made and how did it go down with your managers?

Joris De Snoeck: “Vlerick professors and Bekaert experts put their heads together and came up with a four-day practical training module involving lecturers from the School and speakers from Bekaert. The first session was held in December 2005 and we now organise the programme about twice a year, each time for an international group of some twenty participants. It’s evident from the evaluation reports that our people particularly appreciate the crystal-clear, accessible approach and the ‘ready-to-use’ aspect of the training. Although it’s difficult to measure concrete results, we feel that the programme enables our managers to play a more active part in the decision-making process because they have a better grasp of the financial side of things. This kind of training might even

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be useful in companies where the technical aspects of the business tend to predominate and financial matters have traditionally been in the hands of a select group of accountants and financial controllers. In my view, this sort of programme should be standard practice in a professional modern business.”