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ESSEC Global MBA Blog

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2018

The Saint-Cyr Experience and its Relevance

by Anirban Paul, Global MBA Ambassador 2018-19 | Strategy and Management Major

One of the first things a Global MBA participant experiences as part of the program is the Leadership Training program at Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan, the French military higher education school located about 200 miles from Paris. The 2018-19 batch had the opportunity to visit Saint-Cyr in September this year, one week after the induction program. After a late evening arrival at Saint-Cyr, we were welcomed by military officers who would also be our mentors for the program. After a quick briefing, we were divided into teams of ten and asked to collect our gears and get ready for an early morning start.

What followed was an intense 3-day Leadership training program, where each team had to perform a set of physically-and-intellectually challenging team-building tasks. For each task, our mentor assigned a chief and a deputy chief, who would together lead the task. All team members took turns in managing the tasks as chief and/or deputy chief. Most of us within the team had just met each other and over the first couple of tasks, we got to know more about each other's personalities.

What impressed me was how the Leadership training program was designed to reflect

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the experiences of the corporate world. Having worked in multiple Consulting projects for over ten years, these were my key takeaways from the program:

Leadership: In today's competitive world, leadership skills are crucial for both personal and professional development. Leadership is an important function of management which helps an individual or a business to maximize efficiency and to achieve goals. Over the span of a career, people are likely to lead teams and work with managers of different leadership styles.
The ability to adapt and align to these styles contributes significantly to the success of an individual as well as the organization. Saint-Cyr provided a great opportunity for people to lead teams and work with teammates having different leadership styles. The mentors at the program emphasized the ability to adapt and the importance of active listening as key aspects of leadership development. I am certain that we will continue to develop these qualities throughout the Global MBA program and eventually implement them in our careers upon graduation.

Inclusion and Diversity: We live in a world where inclusion and diversity are key to the success of corporations, especially the ones which have a global footprint. For professionals looking to develop an international career, it is also integral to be able to thrive in a multicultural environment. The current batch of Global MBA participants includes a diverse group of people from over 20 countries.
At Saint-Cyr, each team had a good mix of people from across the globe, which gave everyone a taste of working with people from different cultures and with different personalities. The Saint-Cyr experience, as well as the overall Global MBA program, will provide us with the opportunity to work in an inclusive environment and help us integrate into corporations with diverse cultures seamlessly.

Teamwork: At Saint-Cyr, through the team-building activities, we were able to achieve our assigned goals, collaborate, and synergize. We reflected on how we delegated tasks, influenced each other positively and held accountability as a team. We often faced challenges in completing tasks, but at key moments, many of us stepped up to go the extra mile for the team. This demonstration of team spirit helped us complete tasks and build camaraderie with each other.
At the workplace too, teamwork plays a key role in the success of a project and most importantly the growth of an individual. The Global MBA program is designed around activities that need to be performed as a team and this experience will most definitely prepare participants to work in teams at the workplace.

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