



Team 5 at Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan - “Leadership, team spirit and crisis management” seminar

How can a military mindset be an asset to leaders? - “Leadership, team spirit and crisis management” seminar at Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan

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“The French Army has a strong reputation built on wide operational experience in challenging environments, in various types of conflicts all under tight budgetary constraints.”

How can a military mindset be an asset to leaders? - “Leadership, team spirit and crisis management” seminar at the French army officer school Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan: an intensive and unforgettable human experience

With Neoma Business School, I had the chance to participate in an exceptional program at the French army officer school, Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan. The aim of this seminar was to develop our soft skills: **Leadership, team spirit and crisis management**. For 4 days, we were split in teams of 10-14 people with one mentor – a former military officer, who has a wealth of experience commanding past operations, as well as significant business experience.

We underwent challenging scenarios that required careful analysis, structured decision



open communication and strong interpersonal skills. What does this mean?

I/ Careful analysis, structured decision making, and effective team management through open communication – the importance of organization:

Our mentor consistently adopted the same approach – a practical and pragmatic methodology with feedback:

Scenario:

1. One leader and one second in command were selected – *a team cannot be productive without a leader to make the critical decisions, and detachment gives the benefit of hindsight and a macro vision of the situation; the second in command has an operational role, which is to coordinate the team and the different groups*
2. The mentor explains the scenario to the team: their task is to find a solution to a specific problem, and to overcome an obstacle or a difficult situation – *active listening is crucial*
3. The leader divides the team into think tanks, whose aims are to understand the complex situation and all the insights they require to find solutions – *brainstorming in small groups allows each team to find different solutions and perspectives*
4. Pooling: one person from each think tank shares their teams vision to the whole group through a plan or drawing – *this presents the teams different visions to the leader which they will then*
5. The leader makes their decision and provides feedback to each team, dividing the team into groups according to the strengths and weaknesses of each team members – *as there is a leader, there is no contesting their decision*
6. The teams execute their action plans – *they can make effective readjustments based on the observations and feedback from the leader and the second in command*

Feedback:

7. Collective debriefing
8. Lessons learned
9. Applications of tools and methods
10. Incorporation for the next scenario



analyse the situation before coming to a final decision.

Our mentor was using the portmanteau word “**Réflagir**” (“réfléchir” = to think, and, “agir” = to act) to illustrate this method. The military mindset is an asset to leaders for understanding how to lead and inspire a team, and knowing how to effectively and efficiently delegate. Furthermore, it gives them the skills to demonstrate organizational adaptability and resilience in a changing and uncertain environment.

*It was also the opportunity to put the
Situational Leadership Model by Paul
Hersey and Ken Blanchard into practice.*

N. B. : there is no single "best" style of leadership - effective leadership is task-relevant. There are four leadership styles (directing, coaching, supporting and delegating) according to the amount of Task Behavior and Relationship Behavior that the leader provides to their followers.

II/ Personal skills – Team spirit values:

At the beginning of the seminar, our mentor asked us: “**Do you each know the other members of the team?**” We all answered “yes” simply because we are in the same class, but we were incredibly wrong. We didn’t truly know each other, nor one another’s strengths and the weaknesses until the end of the seminar. We all went through an incredibly bonding learning experience, and discovered that a non-judgmental learning environment is paramount to the development of the strength and power of team spirit and team building.

An example of this is when we all had to climb a 4-meter-high wall. This allowed us to push our limits as some team members are afraid of heights - and to leave our comfort zone for the collective benefit of the group. Everyone is required to participate, as it enforces cooperation and collaboration skills in order to boost collective performance – teamwork is paramount and as the saying goes, “**alone we are nothing**”.

By the end of this, **we have taken away many skills, practical tips and key messages.** Additionally, we have all developed our interpersonal skills to better our decision making, and learnt how to act effectively to grow as individuals within our teams, and as a group. **This life time experience has certainly fostered a strong sense of belonging and a sense of commitment!**

I highly recommend this seminar. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me!



- Our mentor, Christian, a respectful captain who has served more than thirty years in the French paratrooper units - mostly in Africa. We have learned so much by your side!
- Our team 5, for the excellent work we have accomplished, I am so proud of all of you : Mélodie, Clara, Agathe, Candice, Johan, Marc, Antoine, Paul, Thomas et Pierre
- Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan, for their organization and for the incredible and effective lessons we have learnt and the skills we have developed
- Neoma, for their partnership and cooperation, and understanding how formative and insightful this experience can be
- Wavestone, my company, for their support and for my team, with whom I am excited to share and put into practice what I have learned

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Business Development Industrial & Commercial Global Accounts at Veolia

Super article Manon :)

J'aime Répondre | 1 j'aime

... 11 min.

**Katherine Brown**

Junior Professional Associate at Bank of China

Très bien!

J'aime Répondre | 1 j'aime • 2 réponses

... 22 min.

**Manon Plain**

Business Analyst - TOTAL @Wavestone

Ahah, you can speak French now :D Thank you again for your help [Katherine!](#)

18 min.

**Katherine Brown**

Junior Professional Associate at Bank of China

9 min.

Manon Plain hahaha bien sûr

J'aime Répondre

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