

E-Leadership courses at Aarhus University



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OUTLINE

Starting point

- ▶ 10 interviews with highly successful Danish SMEs (growth, turnover)

Two main points of investigation

- ▶ What topics (within e-leadership) are crucial to their success?
- ▶ How do they acquire knowledge and skills?

Building on the insights of these interviews and a quantitative survey with ~70 SMEs we designed and held 3 courses (in cooperation with executive academy)

- ▶ Planning for Growth
- ▶ Social Media Strategy
- ▶ Strategic Business Analytics

Planning for Growth

- Risks and pitfalls for fast growing firms
- Scalable management strategies and models to support growth (organizational and technological)

Social Media Strategy

- Main concepts in communication and collaboration
- Digital economies and strategies for obtaining sustainable competitive advantages
- Search engine optimization and marketing

Strategic Business Analytics

- Leveraging internal and external data to achieve organizational objectives
- Identifying the information needs of decision makers in SMEs
- Selection and deployment of information systems (e.g. online analytical processing and reporting, predictive analytics)

COURSE SETTING

- ▶ All courses planned as half-day workshops on Thursday or Friday
- ▶ Target group: practitioners on management level from SMEs in all industries
- ▶ Cost: ~140€ (or free if participated in survey)
- ▶ Target # of participants: 15 p. course
- ▶ Real # of participants: ~10 p. course
- ▶ Format: presentations of theory and case studies, insights from practitioners/experts in the respective fields -> focus on practical applicability and immediate take-aways
- ▶ Course marketing through multiple channels
 - › Social networks (linkedin, facebook)
 - › Banners and flyer at the university
 - › Direct mailings and calls to a list of SMEs held by AU Exec. Education
 - › Free course participation for all survey respondents

COURSE FEEDBACK AND LESSONS LEARNT I

Qualitative insights ("best/worst experience during the course"):

- + Hands-on, concrete tools
- + Down to earth
- + Good insights for basic understanding, low complexity
- + Both scientific and practitioner-oriented
- Not enough time for "deep understanding" and case work
- Tight agenda
- More discussions

COURSE FEEDBACK AND LESSONS LEARNT II

Some numbers from the feedback forms

- ▶ Did the course live up to expectations (1-5): 1.9
- ▶ Did you consider the course worth attending? (1-5): 1.69
- ▶ How much did you benefit? (1-5): 2.1

Motivation for the course

- ▶ Looking for new inspiration? (1-6): 1.5
- ▶ Knowledge needed in my current job (1-6): 2.0
- ▶ Required for promotion (1-6): 3.3

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Format is important – not too much, not too little time
- ▶ Immediate take-aways are crucial
- ▶ Down to earth and practice-oriented courses with scientific backing

- ▶ Learning from practitioners is highly valued – experts in specific topics to present their experiences as part of courses
- ▶ Decision makers value new insights but do not feel requirements from company: policy support/incentives for additional education or trainings?

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