

INSEAD

Executive
Education

Schneider
Electric

Schneider Electric and INSEAD:
Purposeful Leadership in
a Digital World



Executive Summary

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The Partners

The Challenge

The Commitment

The Initiative

The Impact

Conclusion

Schneider Electric had a new strategy that called for energising its workforce of 150,000 people to lead the industry shift toward digital solutions and services. Having led the transformation from French multinational to truly global company from the top, Schneider's senior executives realised that this new shift required a change in leadership mindset, focus and behaviour at all levels.

INSEAD's Executive Education experts suggested a combination of face-to-face and digital modules, which *applied* the principles of digital disruption to "Transforming Schneider Leadership," as the initiative came to be called. The school had successfully used digital learning in the past for customised programmes on innovation, corporate entrepreneurship, finance and strategy. But could leadership, a capacity grounded in personal commitment and social bonds, be learned in this way? And since the pressures of tradition and performance seemed to stifle Schneider managers' ability to lead, could the digital transformation become a vehicle to free leaders up throughout the company?

As the two partners worked closely together on learning design over several months and on delivery over the past two years, they found that the answer was yes. The product of their ongoing collaboration was a multi-level system of leadership development programmes, tailored to the challenges of each managerial level and customised to Schneider's new strategy.

Built upon the idea of "acting on several levels of the system at once" to accelerate change and foster a shared sense of responsibility and opportunity, Transforming Schneider Leadership has touched more than 1,500 participants so far – starting with the next generation of senior management and expanding to include early-career high-potentials and top-tier executives.

The initiative has exceeded both partners' expectations in terms of impact on strategy implementation and cultural change. It has also challenged traditional models of blended learning. Schneider managers report that they are behaving differently, experimenting with new ways to lead and to do business digitally. The company continues to post excellent results. And the initiative is about to be expanded to the Executive Committee and enhanced for the company's women leaders.

