Many high-growth companies are too busy driving sales, refining their product and putting out fires to think about developing the leadership skills of their managers. Leading global impact investor Acumen realized that a lack of strong middle to senior management was a key bottleneck for many of its portfolio companies. It wanted a transformational experience to develop a top-tier bench of middle to senior managers from their portfolio companies, spread across Africa. A traditional approach wasn’t going to work. “Talent is the biggest issue for many of our investee companies, whether they know it or not,” said Molly Alexander, Head of Talent Development at Acumen. “However, investing in talent development is not yet a strategic priority for most early stage companies. The so-called ‘soft skills’ required to lead teams and successfully manage change are difficult to find, and rarely addressed by traditional training options.”

AMI designed a 9-month high impact leadership development programme that focuses on helping middle to senior managers in high growth companies develop people management and strategic problem solving skills. We took 26 participants from nine companies across East and West Africa through a transformational blended learning journey that combined world-class online content with engaging in-person workshops and structured opportunities for on-the-job practice. The programme focused on core skills but also encouraged participants to take ‘electives’ from AMI’s 45 short courses and 2,000 searchable and downloadable tools, to meet their personal learning needs.

AMI’s top facilitators hosted four 2-day engaging and interactive in-person workshops. Participants engaged in role plays and discussion, and had a chance to practice their new skills. Critically, participants immediately applied what they learned on the job, through a team action learning project, as well as through structured opportunities for on-the-job goal setting and peer-to-peer feedback.

Not only did the programme help participants develop their ‘soft’ leadership skills, but it helped them think strategically about organizational transformation and how to embed management best practices in their business, boosting the bottom line as well as their own careers.
100% of CEOs surveyed from participating companies reported improvement in senior management performance after the programme

77% reported improved efficiency of workflow and 50% reported improved employee engagement

100% of participants found direct application of what they learned to their work

97% acquired brand new skills in key management topics

“At Acumen we understand talent development solutions need to be practical, affordable and accessible; and focused on observable outcomes that support individual and organizational behavior change. AMI’s user-centric approach to learning makes them the perfect partner to build programs for our portfolio companies.”

– Molly Alexander, Acumen

“The AMI Program was practical, rigorous, and gave me the platform from which to effectively manage myself and others”

– Senior Manager at Sanergy, a participating company

AMI works has worked with a range of organisations on management development programmes to for middle and frontline managers. If you want to develop your team and transform your organisation, get in touch to see how we can help at sales@africanmanagers.org

The Impact

The African Management Initiative (AMI) helps businesses across Africa build motivated, productive and effective workforces through our unique learning and transformation programmes, delivered via web, mobile and in-person workshops.

We work with managers and entrepreneurs on building key business management skills, and have partnerships with numerous organisations on work-readiness programmes for young people entering the workforce. More than just courses, AMI programmes are catalysts that can transform the day-to-day business practices of your organisation.

Unlike traditional training, AMI uses experiential and action learning to get learners using tools and practicing new skills in real-time. The focus is on getting people to adopt new habits and practices, and to apply them systematically with their teams. The results are improved ownership, accountability, collaboration and performance. AMI has developed over 50 practical business modules – including over 3,000 tools – with Africa’s leading business schools and global experts on adult learning.

Our world-class content is combined with coaching, action-learning projects and networking tools to ensure that employees apply what they learn on the job and hold each other accountable to the highest standards of performance and responsibility.

Experience AMI and transform your business! To learn more, visit our website, watch a short video about who we are, what we do and why, or read about AMI in the news on Euronews, CNN, Financial Times, AllAfrica and Kenya’s Business Daily

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