

THE FUTURE IS ACTION LEARNING BSN GRADUATION 2016 | SPEECH TWAN PAES MBA SALC

During the Graduation Ceremony of 17 September 2016 Mr Twan Paes, one of our most experienced Action Learning trainers, addressed the question whether there is a future for Action Learning. His statement is that “the future is action learning”. Keeping and improving your Action Learning skills are key for the future performance of management, Mr. Paes concludes.



Dear graduates, family, friends,

Congratulations with obtaining your Action Learning MBA degree. Frank asked me: is there a future for Action Learning? That is a great question. Action Learning is developed in the 50's. Is it still relevant today? Yes, it may even be more relevant than ever! Organizations increasingly have to cope with a growing diversity and uncertainty.

Does Action Learning help to respond to that? And does it help us to create new opportunities?

I really think so. Many organizations (and their leaders) have not yet found a successful and sustainable way of dealing with this uncertainty and diversity. We do not succeed by just managing the so called upperstream. Therefore it is important to create an atmosphere in which all persons feel appreciated and respected, as well as supported. These invisible aspects of the undercurrent require leadership skills.



Action Learning involves attention for both the upperstream and the undercurrent. It also requires a balance in the roles of leader, coach and manager.

The power of Action Learning is that it contributes to the continuous process of achieving consensus on challenges and problems. It begins at an early stage! Let's take primary school as an example. The great Action Learning question in this case is: “How do I prepare children for their unpredictable future? ”. This is absolutely different from the past, since we have always prepared people for a more predictable future. But also the banking sector, industry and government should keep asking these kind of questions.

To reach agreement within a team, it takes Action Learning Coaches who can speak about the problems. Also, they need to be able to make use of the power of differences in their team. Action Learning Coaches need to be able to let others learn. Recently, I was talking with a student who gave such a striking example: "Although his decent preparation for implementing strategies, he was increasingly engaged with the diversity and emotions in the undercurrent. This was demanding for him. It required more than just knowledge of models and theories."

So, does Action Learning help us to create new opportunities and cope with increasing diversity?



Yes, as long as you keep working on skills. Like problem analysis, dialogue, teambuilding, giving feedback, etcetera. Furthermore, it is important to realize three roles, namely: leader, manager and coach. Leadership means: having a vision and to convey inspiration to your employees. The manager sets targets, determines the strategy and makes adjustments. As a coach you are motivating people to keep developing themselves as individuals, and motivate them to develop collaborative skills.

Is your MBA degree sufficient to do all that? No, it is just the start. What is ahead of you is lifelong learning. Keep curious and face the uncertain future. Action Learning is the key to success.

I wish you all the best with your future challenges. You have all deserved your MBA degree, but in the future you all need to prove to be worth it.

Frank, you asked me: is there a future *for* Action Learning? No, the future *is* Action Learning!

Graduates: enjoy this beautiful day and keep on Action Learning... The companies need you.

Thank you for your attention.

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