



# Training Executives in MAPFRE

Text prepared from information supplied verbally by Elvira Arango Luque

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«The training of those who work in the insurance company is a matter of concern to its Executives. This subject has been approached from many angles in the insurance industry, ranging from purely commercial training, to the development of overall plans for the entire company by external consultants, where necessary.

MAPFRE has paid a great deal of attention to this matter and believes that it is important that readers of TRÉBOL, who are mainly insurance company executives, are aware of it and can assess its importance for their companies, in the knowledge that what is good for some may also be good for others, and that a successful initiative in one market may not be applicable in another.

We describe below the more important aspects of the scheme for the purpose of sharing this particular experience.»

## Background

The working practices of insurance companies have only been included in university degree courses in recent years. Traditionally, joining an insurance company involved the acquisition of extensive knowledge of new and specific areas of

the business, while gradually and imperceptibly adapting to the culture of the company. Based on that practice, in the 70s MAPFRE began to organise its training courses for employees and agents in the different business units that were being set up (motor, life, general and industrial insurance), by adapting the content to the products to be sold and the changing needs of the market. Operational training in executive skills and expertise, as understood today, was not then undertaken systematically by all units as a whole. MAPFRE's International Centre for Executive Training (CIFD) was set up with the objective of establishing a «common programme» of integrated training, aimed initially at executives, and taking advantage of synergies between the different business units.

## Origins of MAPFRE's International Centre for Executive Training (CIFD)

In 1998, MAPFRE, as part of its mission and in accordance with its business principles, believed it was desirable and necessary to establish a «Centre» to train group executives in-house, thereby promoting the integration of Head Office and Spanish Regional Management, as well as the Executives of the affiliated companies abroad, into the *corporate culture*.

In 1999, on the recommendation of Human Resources, the Management Committee of Sistema MAPFRE approved the establishment of the centre. Afterwards, a study and an «identification of requirements» was drawn up by Senior Management of

Sistema in order to define the *profile of a MAPFRE executive*, by listing the strategic objectives to be attained so that the company would be able to face the new century with a suitably prepared executive team.

The conclusions of the study are summarised in the triangle shown below, Figure 1, which should be equilateral so as to show the equal values of the different abilities that an executive needs to develop: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and ATTITUDES, or rather: to know, to know how to do it and to know how to conduct oneself.

The result of this plan leads to a «change in PERFORMANCE».

As a result of this a three-year plan (2000-2003) was prepared aimed at three clearly defined groups: 1) Senior Management, 2) Managers, Sub-Managers, middle management and heads of department, and 3) young persons with management potential in the company. The plan was rounded off with courses for Assistants and Secretaries to the Management. The entire **design** of the contents of the plan was carried out in-house, in the Centre, in close coordination with the policy and strategy initiatives of the Human Resources Department. MAPFRE Executives act as speakers, and external consultants, who are training professionals, are contracted to give the seminars and courses.

### 1) Senior Management Programme

Specifically adapted to the schedule of senior executives, who number some 80 persons, this programme is arranged in



seminars on a single theme for groups of 20. The courses are residential, last two days and are held once or twice a year. They have taken place in the vicinity of Madrid (Spain) and in locations near that are pleasant and secluded, such as Segovia, Chinchón and Toledo.

The structure of the courses for Senior Management follows a classical methodological pattern, and they are based on a series of presentations by accomplished in-house and external speakers, and on discussions and case studies. The courses always finish with assessment questionnaires, in which those present make recommendations for future seminars, which are carefully noted by CIFD.

The main subjects covered in the 2000-2003 Training plan were:

- ▶ Strategy, financial environment and markets
- ▶ Aspects of commerce and marketing
- ▶ Aspects relating to organisational performance and management skills
- ▶ New technology

## 2) Management Programme

The training plan for 2000-2003, designed for around one thousand executives, represents the bulk of the work carried out by the CIFD since its creation. The objectives were to:

- ▶ Assist executives to master key skills
- ▶ Improve flexibility and employability
- ▶ Develop key expertise and management skills

The plan divided the content – taken from the initial «identification of requirements» – into three residential seminars of three or four days, in which the executives were encouraged to participate actively in the sessions and

# Contents of our Programmes

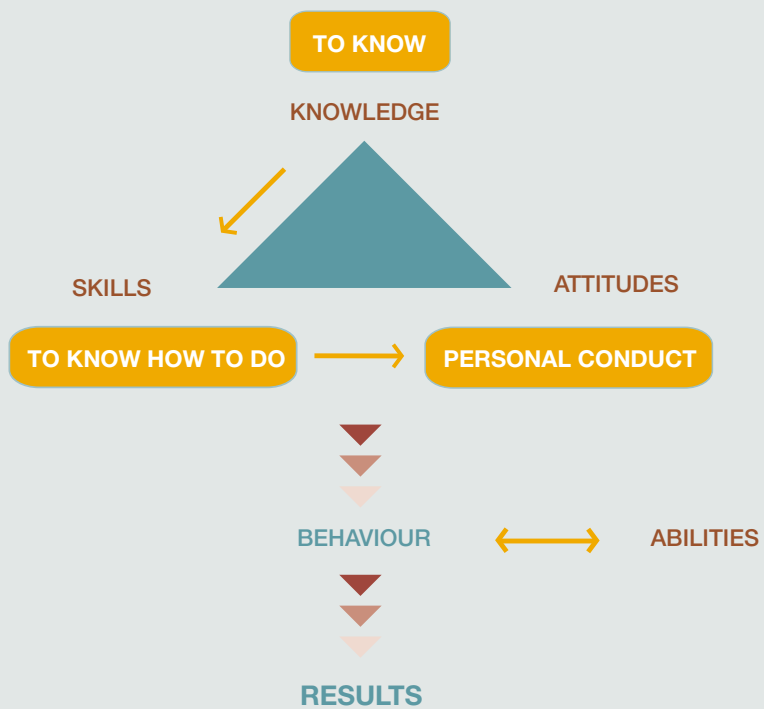


Figure 1

to develop specific skills. The main «group topics» were the following:

### (2000-2001)

▶ STAGE I: «Development of management skills according to the Sistema MAPFRE culture.» Code of Corporate Governance, Institutional and Company Principles, Leadership, Teamwork, Strategic Planning.

### (2001-2002)

▶ STAGE II: «Executive communication in MAPFRE.» Communication as the focal

point for Training, Delegation and Team Motivation.

### (2002-2003)

▶ STAGE III: «Management of professional relationships in MAPFRE.» Interpersonal Negotiation, Resolution, Problem Analysis and Decision Taking.

The seminars for executives aim to promote the best practices amongst executives of the different units. They create an excellent opportunity for a valuable exchange of experiences within the company, from different viewpoints,

## Profile of MAPFRE Executive

### Knowledge (KNOW)

- ▶ Master the way the markets work
- ▶ Know the financial products
- ▶ Understand the investment policy
- ▶ Know the marketing strategy
- ▶ Be aware of the concept of overall quality
- ▶ Possess a comprehensive view of the company

### Skills (KNOW HOW TO DO IT)

- ▶ Know how to lead
- ▶ Guide and train teams
- ▶ Use latest technology in daily work
- ▶ Draw up strategic plans
- ▶ Manage human resources
- ▶ Develop a business task

### Attitude (KNOW HOW TO CONDUCT ONESELF)

- ▶ Encourage in-house company communication
- ▶ Structure work in an orderly fashion
- ▶ Be able to face up to change and fresh challenges

both geographical and sectorial, and they reflect the particular difficulties experienced by each work centre, unit or country within MAPFRE.

In order to evaluate the effect of this programme on the day-to-day activities of executives, a «follow-up» was recently instituted by means of a seminar lasting a day and a half; the results and experiences derived from this will be included in a forthcoming *Manual of Good Practice for MAPFRE Executives*.

**«During the course of STAGE I the Good Government Code was given to each and every manager attending the seminar. The presentation on institutional and business principles was always done by a senior MAPFRE Executive»**

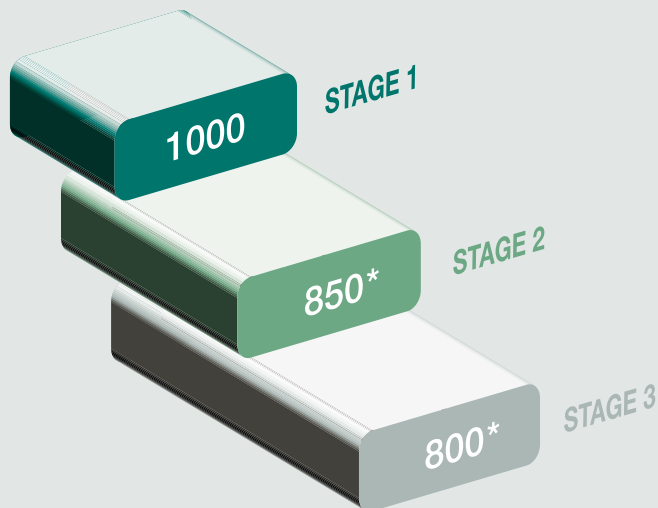
### **3) Programme for Young Persons with Management Potential**

«Project HORIZON» is intended to contribute towards the professional development of employees, whether or not they are executives. This is a training programme for persons with a «clearly defined profile» and good potential: aged between 29 and 36, university graduates, with knowledge of languages (at least English), a minimum of two years' service in MAPFRE and a certain loyalty to the company.

In this programme the participants play a more active and collaborative role because of the highly demanding nature of the course.



### N° of participants



\* Total number of executive participants from Spain and affiliates in Latin America. The number of participants in Stages II and III decreased because the relevant

seminars were held in the places of origin of executives from the Latin America affiliates in order to avoid travel.

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The participants are divided into groups of about twenty persons. The groups are selected so as to include men and women from **various countries**, employees from **Head Office** in Madrid

and also from the **regional workforce**. This procedure helps to achieve a rich cultural, social and human mix which is highly desirable in a group that lives together for 350 hours of training (40 days), by following an extremely interactive methodology which includes visits and sessions outside the residential centre. There are four modules per annum, lasting 10 days each.

The intensive working sessions are complemented by presentations by leading speakers, both from MAPFRE and external sources. The lecturers from Sistema MAPFRE (about 50%) share with the participants the general strategy

objectives of the unit or business that they manage.

The principal working areas dealt with in the program are:

- ▶ Strategy, human resources and organization
- ▶ Marketing, commercial management, information systems and corporate communications
- ▶ Insurance management
- ▶ Financial management

Finally, it should be noted that the groups prepare a Final Project or thesis, supervised by a Senior Executive of MAPFRE, on a theme that may possibly be implemented by the company in the future. Some examples of projects already carried out are listed in the following page.

The success of the «HORIZON programme» is significant when it is borne in mind that 70% of participants (100 to date) have been promoted or have assumed new or increased responsibilities during or after finishing the programme.

#### 4) Programme for Management Assistants

As a complement to the aforementioned Training Plan, seminars are also being given to executive support personnel such as Secretaries, Management Assistants, etc. with the objective of covering and developing the following aspects:

- ▶ Time Management
- ▶ Prioritisation of tasks
- ▶ Customer Service



## Topics covered by working groups of «project HORIZON»

- ▶ How to reduce TURNOVER of commercial personnel
- ▶ Coordinated management of high volume MAPFRE CALL CENTRES
- ▶ Automate the management of FRAUD in motor insurance
- ▶ Spanish-speaking REINSURANCE market B2B: prospects, facultative placement processes
- ▶ RECONCILIATION of working and family life
- ▶ VIEW of trends within MAPFRE
- ▶ IMC: the integrated MAPFRE CLIENT
- ▶ Project 4 x 4: 4 million agents = 4 MILLION potential CLIENTS
- ▶ Comprehensive MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE for MAPFRE
- ▶ CORPORATE IMAGE at MAPFRE
- ▶ Network of MAPFRE DRIVING SCHOOLS
- ▶ Project Witness (the succession of PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES)
- ▶ BROKERS' channel in MAPFRE
- ▶ Modelling for FORESTRY INSURANCE
- ▶ TELEWORKING
- ▶ MAPFRE: a multinational with VALUES
- ▶ DEPENDENCY insurance in MAPFRE
- ▶ Management of COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING in MAPFRE
- ▶ Development of the FUNERAL EXPENSES INSURANCE BUSINESS
- ▶ Only one call: unification of CALL CENTRES



▶ Communication, interpersonal relations

▶ Company practice

«The seminars for executives create an excellent opportunity for a valuable exchange of experiences within the company, from different viewpoints, both geographical and sectorial»

## CONCLUSIONS

CIFD is complementing the traditional technical training within Sistema MAPFRE, with new areas of skills and management expertise, which until now had not been developed with the same dedication and uniformity in all units.

Thanks to a consolidated company culture established over many years and the great advantage that most employees share the Spanish language, it has been possible to design a training programme adapted to the centralised structure of MAPFRE which is helping to strengthen

the relationships and encourage feedback between the executives of the different units and companies in the countries in which MAPFRE operates. ■

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CIFD headquarters in El Plantío, Madrid, Spain