ATOS & ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL
CO-CREATE A PIONEERING ACADEMY
FOR SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGERS
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ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL | Atos
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
In 2016, Atos (global leader in digital transformation) engaged ESCP Business School to design and deliver an integrated blended learning program to address the development needs of Atos Service Delivery Managers (SDM) across the globe. This ongoing partnership has been spearheaded by Atos SDM Academy.

Evolving corporate customer needs require SDMs to interface with many widespread and complex stakeholders (clients, operations teams, systems architects, vendors and internal corporate functions). The Service Delivery Managers’ mission in Atos is a top factor in maintaining long term customer satisfaction and retention, and accounts for a substantial proportion of Atos revenues. SDMs cannot successfully accomplish their mission without relevant technical and business expertise combined with strong transversal leadership skills.

Success of the program in its 6th year continues to be measured against specific learning and development goals:

- Develop and strengthen at certifiable levels, the interpersonal and business skills that Atos Service Delivery Managers deploy in their delivery of services and management of stakeholders

The certification awarded – whose independence is guaranteed by ESCP Business School – is linked to measurable and verifiable learning milestones.

Between February 2016 and June 2022, over 1000 SDMs have enrolled in the program and to date, nearly 800 have achieved full certification (75 credits or over). Of these participants, nearly 500 achieved their certification with Honors (90 credits or over). Approximately 10% of SDMs were part of the Senior SDM stream.

The program, initially conceived as blended – combining face to face workshops with synchronous and asynchronous online contents, evolved into being fully online by 2018. This required flexibility and constant adjustment of structure and content in a manner that ensured the same level of participation and learning. The high level of co-creation...
has allowed for greater agility and alignment between Atos evolving needs, delivery methodology and content.

Evidence and data collected over the 6 years confirm that the Atos SDM Development Program has had an observable impact on the upskilling of SDMs, including:

- Increased interfacing between SDMs of different geographies and sectors and account executives, leading to better understanding of customer business.
- Stronger, and verifiable level of knowledge and commitment of Service Delivery Managers to Atos standards and methodologies around the world, with a positive financial impact.
- Improvement of stakeholder management and negotiation skills.
- Enhanced strategic vision of Senior Service Delivery Managers.
INTRODUCTION

Atos is a global leader in digital transformation with 112,000 employees and annual revenue of c. €11 billion. European number one in cybersecurity, cloud and high performance computing, the Group provides tailored end-to-end solutions for all industries in 71 countries. A pioneer in decarbonization services and products, Atos is committed to a secure and decarbonized digital for its clients. Atos is a SE (Societas Europaea) and listed on Euronext Paris.

The purpose of Atos is to help design the future of the information space. Its expertise and services support the development of knowledge, education and research in a multicultural approach and contribute to the development of scientific and technological excellence. Across the world, the Group enables its customers and employees, and members of societies at large to live, work and develop sustainably, in a safe and secure information space.

First established in Paris in 1819, ESCP Business School (L&D Partner) is the oldest business school in the world – and the biggest in Europe, with campuses in Paris, Berlin, London, Madrid, Turin, and Warsaw. Its mission is to develop the next generation of transnational business leaders. ESCP Business School has a comprehensive portfolio of 46 academic programs, with many consistently ranked among the top 10 in the world, and develops customized programs for executive education. At any given time there are over 8,000 students enrolled in different programs, representing 100 different nationalities. ESCP Business School is also a pioneer in digital education methodologies.

ESCP Business School has established over 140 academic alliances worldwide, and is multi-accredited (AACSB, EQUIS, EFMD MBA, EFMD EMBA, 5 European Higher Ed Standards).
THE CHALLENGE
THE CHALLENGE

As described in the executive summary, trends in global customer needs required SDMs to constantly adapt service delivery. Atos SDM Academy in 2015 expressed their vision of the SDM role:

- Excellent service delivery, not only in line with client expectations at a regional level, but globally and through shared, iterable, and certifiable Atos standards and methodologies. In summary, leveraging Atos expertise and global presence had to be accomplished in a more consistent and integrated way, providing heightened brand recognition.

- A deeper understanding of customers’ business and sector trends and how the impact of technology on client business was reshaping the role of SDMs. As technology became the core of business transformation, Service Delivery Managers by 2016 were increasingly expected to go beyond their role of ensuring operational excellence. A very graphic metaphor which illustrates the evolution of the role was: SDMs must become more “orchestra conductors” than “operational wizards”.

A definition of the SDM mission as envisioned in 2015 places a much stronger focus on complexity, the global dimension of the role, and anticipating customer needs in a proactive way rather than responding to them.

This goes far beyond making sure that Service Level Agreement standards are followed.

Atos – in anticipation of this trend – took steps – spearheaded by Global Human Resources: Group Learning & Development, to facilitate this evolution in 2015-2016:

- Re-structuring / regrouping of SDMs to align with account clusters.
- Redefinition of SDM roles and levels of accountability.
Upgrading of competency and skills matrix for Service Delivery Managers at various levels according to the scope of accounts, for a better alignment of training and development plans with SDM needs.

Investment in learning resources and upgrading of Atos Learning Management Systems.

Launching internal communication channels to foster SDM exchange.

Although these measures were having some impact, by 2015 the pace of the internal change was considered to not respond fully to the needs and pressures of client / market context. Surveys and management feedback showed that:

- SDM awareness of standards and methodologies was not globally uniform, especially for the SDM population with less than 7 years on the job experience.
- Understanding of SDM job scope and definition varied between regions and businesses.
- Slow pace of change from focus on operational efficiency to one of managing and leveraging resources in a more strategic and customer-focused way.

In 2015 Atos management and Atos Global Human Resources: Group Learning & Development recognized the need for an integrated and customized SDM Certification program. The desired impact of the L&D initiative outlined from the outset was:
To have fully certified SDM professionals, ensuring globally uniform training and qualification standards, in line with Atos methods, procedures and terminology, through a systematic development and training approach in three different categories of SDM skills and competencies.
The SDM Certification Program was to address:

- **Atos Standards:**
  Working according to Atos principles; Including business lines, product & services portfolio.

- **Key SDM Skills/Soft Skills:**
  The cluster of influence behaviors, leadership and communication skills that SDMs need to engage all their stakeholders.

- **Methodologies/Technologies:**
  The theoretical models, methods and techniques used by Atos SDM professionals.

**Key conditions:**

- The program was initially to focus on SDMs with between 1 to 8 years experience.

- The program was to include coordination and integration of relevant Atos online contents available with those designed by L&D Partner (in this case ESCP Business School), in a seamless learning journey, providing a high degree of individual customization.

- The L&D partner (ESCP Business School) would provide independent certification and verify that certified SDMs achieved the required credits, providing support along the whole of the itinerary.

- The continuance of the Certification Program after the pilot year, would be dependent on achieving verifiable results linked to participants’ and organization’s satisfaction with learning objectives achieved, measured by pre-assessments and post-assessment indicators in the three key learning dimensions (SDM Standards, Skills and Methodologies / Technologies).
THE COMMITMENT
ESCP Business School (L&D Partner) analysis

Both Atos SDM Academy and ESCP Business School’s mantra in executive education is that unless there is a deep understanding of the business and of the target population, learning programs cannot be relevant, applicable or impactful.

What was key to structuring the learning journey?

- Partner’s understanding of Atos business context: current and future challenges.
- Partner’s understanding of SDM role, mission, associated competencies and related observable behaviors, as well as desired changes.
- Partner’s engaging SDMs from the outset, in debate about their role and its impact on business.
- Partner’s knowledge of Atos methodologies and standards and how these support service delivery across the board.
- Having an adaptive and agile approach, given the constant need to update certification criteria and indicators, as the role evolves to address changing business context.
incorporating the cross-cultural dimension of behavior change (including organizational cultures).

Partner’s ability to deliver in several languages across the globe.

Effectively integrating Atos contents, specifically principles, technology, methodologies, standards and procedures at the core of SDM role.

Atos was generous in providing access to senior SDMs in different markets and sharing information with ESCP Business School. There was a clear understanding from the business that the quality of proposals was dependent on this understanding of both context, role, and desired learning outcomes.

The complexity and scope of the project was verifiably high for all parties concerned. At the time there were approximately one thousand Service Delivery Managers that could qualify for participation in the program, thus the importance for the L&D function and partners given the resources required and the management expectations involved.

For the proposal phase, ESCP Business School gathered a team of their experts from various fields to work together on building a proposal structure that integrated all learning needs.

Clear from the start was the need for the program to go beyond generic upskilling, transmitting methodologies, standards, shared procedures and best practices. A shift in mindset had to be set in motion:

- Increased strategic vision of customers’ business (and their customers’ customers).
- Ability to negotiate with multiple widespread stakeholders with potentially conflicting interests to facilitate sustainable solutions.
- Proactivity in sharing experience and best practices across the globe.
- Constantly learning about the client to anticipate needs, and interface with account executives, contributing to innovation and identifying opportunities.
- Increased sense of accountability for financial impact of service delivery on accounts.
ESCP Business School commitments

Imbedded in the proposal for the pilot SDM Certification Program were the following commitments:

- To deliver during 2016 a 4-month customized SDM Certification Program for at least 6 SDM cohorts of approximately 18 participants each from different regions (Asia, USA, North and Southern Europe, in English, French, Spanish and German) with a blended approach.

- To achieve certification any single participant would have a minimum of 75 credits out of 100, by achieving agreed learning deliverables and milestones, and testing learning through post-assessments, outlined in next section (L&D Initiative). These assessments would be co-created with, and validated by Atos to ensure relevance with Atos SDM job responsibilities.

- Full certification would required SDMs to invest approximately 60 hours of learning over 4 months.

- Active and ongoing tutoring with ESCP Business School professors

- Administration and coordination of the learning journey by ESCP Business School.
THE L&D INITIATIVE
Overview

The program, which was initially conceived as blended, combined onsite workshops with synchronous and asynchronous online contents. As the demand for the program increased, so did the number of cohorts each year, and thus the learning journey evolved into being fully online by 2018 – hosted on a specifically tailored interactive Learning Management System (LMS) provided and managed by ESCP Business School. This has successfully responded to the geographical spread and number of participants simultaneously completing the program.

How does the tailored LMS enable the learning journey?

Each cohort (intake) of 18 participants has access to their Home on the ESCP learning platform. It is through this learning platform that SDMs address monthly learning milestones unfolding progressively over the 4-month journey. The LMS allows to fully integrate the three learning itineraries that are described further on in this chapter.

Participants thus complete required exercises, quizzes and assessments corresponding to each month’s milestone, submit assignments, participate in thematic forums, upload proof of completion of Atos MyLearning courses, and directly access relevant documentation and asynchronous audio-visual content.

The LMS allows for effective and agile coordination and follow-up by program manager and trainers. An important feature is that each cohort is assigned a specific Lead Tutor, responsible for monitoring the specific group and individual progress within the intake, contributing to the establishment of group trust and focus.
General evolution of program since 2016

The primary objective continues to be that of achieving maximum worldwide integration of SDM knowledge and skill set, while ensuring a balance with local practices and cultures, adapting to changing business needs. How this journey was to unfold implied – and still does – having a structure that combines both Atos hosted contents with ESCP Business School contents, the sum of three aligned learning itineraries.

To achieve these objectives requires ongoing adaptation of contents and learning methodologies, in turn made possible through a close working partnership.

The SDM Certification program was launched in 2016, and achieved the measurable and agreed targets of delivering the program within the first year of its launch to 8 cohorts between February 2016 and 2017. During this first year, face to face workshops were delivered in India, USA, UK, Austria, Poland, Germany, France and Spain to 150 participants in 4 different languages.

This was achieved with an excellent level of participant satisfaction (and their managers’) despite the demanding standards and level of commitment required to achieve full certification. These factors were key to the long-term engagement in the program that exists today.
As of 2018, Senior SDMs were included in the program, adding on to the need to complete the core contents an additional individual assignment and oral exam. The participant is expected to demonstrate their industry knowledge, strategic vision and awareness of trends in their specific business area, as well as their understanding of how the SDM role is evolving.

Communication and enrolment in the program

Achieving a high inscription rate at first required the launching of an effective communication campaign on behalf of Atos SDM Academy which broadcast the program and its desired outcomes, with a focused message on “what are the outcomes and value for you?”:

- Facilitating and exploring techniques and tools that you can directly apply to your SDM activities.
- Developing confidence and influence in your role as an SDM specialist when engaging with customers and other stakeholders on relevant topics and issues.
- Providing an externally recognized diploma certified by ESCP Business School, one of the leading business schools in the world.

SDMs request participation in the program through their direct managers, who confirm nomination through Atos SDM Academy.

Program description:

How does the certification program work?

1. Three integrated learning itineraries – complementary to each other - shape the 4-month learning journey, and provide each participant with the final number of credits achieved. Number of credits achievable during the learning journey itself total 65. The remaining 35 credits are part of the post-assessment challenge, important to evaluate the learning milestones reached. These three integrated itineraries are:

   a. Atos MyLearning specific individual itinerary (20 credits): established through individual training needs analysis test which defines which Atos MyLearning online courses (on standards, methodologies and Atos best practices) each participant needs to conclude successfully by the end of the program. ESCP Business School program manager verifies that these milestones are accomplished.

   b. Experiential workshops & webinars itinerary (30 credits)

      i. Two 1 day workshops – which are mandatory and irreplaceable - explore influence styles, conflict management, and negotiation skills. Participants have the opportunity to practice through case simulations – customized to Atos SDM reality, with both colleagues and professors, and receive
personalized feedback. Simulation of situations (such as complex negotiation cases and role-plays) require participants to interface directly with expert trainers. This ensures that the simulations be sufficiently challenging for participants, and allows for in-depth observation, feedback and coaching on the part of facilitators and trainers.

ii. 4 thematic webinars: consisting in monthly participative micro-workshops on SDM leadership, cross-cultural effectiveness, and stakeholder management. These micro-workshops include self-diagnosis tools, team exercises and debates. Pre-webinar contributions to debate forum on the subject also provide credits. Should a participant not be able to attend a specific webinar due to work constraints, as the session is recorded, credits can be earned by submitting a summary of the recording and completing a relevant exercise linked to webinar subject.

c. Online ESCP Business School asynchronous itinerary (15 credits): mandatory for all, include two customized in-tray cases, stretching analytical, planning, leadership, decision making and written communication skills. The in-trays bring an element of gamification: Participants take on the role of a newly promoted SDM faced with various challenges on an important account. The way they respond to these challenges by communicating with various stakeholders will define the number of credits achieved in this learning path.

2. Defining and ensuring the learning standards

Features and success factors of the 4-month program include:

a. An initial individual training needs analysis verifying participants’ knowledge of Atos standards, methodologies and best practices. These 60 question assessments were developed and designed online by ESCP Business School, with Atos input and validation.

b. The results of this training needs analysis would define the individually tailored part of the learning journey linked to Atos online contents. ESCP Business School would be responsible for monitoring and verifying individual deliverables.

c. Continuous update of criteria and indicators related to above point is carried out, in coordination with Atos, to ensure that needs analysis and assessments are relevant to SDM evolving responsibilities. These have been reviewed three times since the program was launched, to ensure this alignment with SDM reality.
d. **On-line post-assessment** testing learning of standards, methodologies, and skills, accounts for 35 credits, as part of the minimum total of 75 credits out of 100 required for certification. Certification with Honors would require 90 credits. Should a participant not achieve the 75 credits required for certification, they are given the opportunity of re-enrolling with a future cohort.

e. The **feedback received by participants** themselves and other stakeholders, who help the program to evolve in order to continue being relevant to next cohorts. 90% of certified **participants score the program over 9 out of 10 in all quality indicators**, (methodology, content, quality of professors, organization, tutoring, relevance of program, applicability).

f. **Other specifications:**

i. Minimum number of participants per cohort (intake): 12 and maximum 18 for a high quality of debate, exchange and diversity, while guaranteeing frequency and quality of feedback from tutors, trainers and professors involved.

ii. Each cohort (intake) is accompanied throughout by a specific lead ESCP trainer / tutor that participants can contact at any time on learning aspects.

iii. Each SDM requires endorsement from the line manager who assesses and confirms participation in program.

iv. The participant must complete training needs analysis (questionnaire) before the first remote workshop is started.

v. Participation in the remote workshops is mandatory and essential. In case of absence, the participant cannot pass the SDM Learning Program.
The 4 webinars

KEY SDM SKILLS AND CHALLENGES
This first webinar aims at engaging SDMs in debate about their role, responsibilities, challenges, and the scope of their role in ensuring we become strategic partners to our customers. Participants will engage in teams in doing a SWOT analysis of their role. This session also provides guidance about how to address the in-tray case study.

MANAGING DIVERSITY AND DISTANCE
Our last webinar explores the three steps to cross-cultural effectiveness: How to thrive in a culturally diverse environment, where we also have to achieve results with others across distances and cultures. Prior to the webinar participants will find out more about their cultural preferences and those of others, by completing their cross-cultural variables questionnaire.

SDM LEADERSHIP ROLE
Our second webinar explores some key principles of effective leadership, how we develop leadership skills, and how we adapt our leadership to address different situations. Participants will have the opportunity to find out more about their own styles, and the impact of their style on others.

MANAGING STAKEHOLDER AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS
Dealing with multiple stakeholders in a variety of everyday situations is part of the context any SDM must deal with efficiently. This session will explore how to draw your influence radar and matrix, and exercise strategic stakeholder management skills by drawing up a stakeholder plan.
SDM Certification Program: The Integrated Steps & Timeline

- **MONTH 1**
  - Training Needs Assessment Questionnaire

- **MONTH 2**
  - IN-TRAY Case 1
  - Online Workshops: Influencing Styles - Conflict Management & Negotiation

- **MONTH 3**
  - IN-TRAY Case 2
  - Webinar 2: Leadership

- **MONTH 4**
  - Webinar 4: Cross-Cultural Effectiveness & Post-Assessment Case
  - Kick-Off Webinar
  - Webinar 1: SDM Role and Business Skills
  - Webinar 3: Managing Stakeholders

ATOS SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ATOS SPECIFIC ONLINE LEARNING CONTENT AND ITINERARY
THE IMPACT

ATOS SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
ATOS SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Between May 2016 and June 2022, approximately 1000 SDMs enrolled in the program, 80% achieved full certification (more than 75 credits). Over 75% achieved their certification with Honors (with 90 credits or over).

Evidence and data collected over the 6 years confirm that the Atos SDM Development Program has had an observable impact on the upskilling of SDMs, according to feedback from their direct managers:

SDM Evolution over 6 months
AVERAGE ALL COHORTS

- Average scores in Influence and conflict management skills
- Average scores in knowledge of SDM related methodologies / technology
- Average scores in knowledge of SDM related service standards

Evidence and data collected over the 6 years confirm that the Atos SDM Development Program has had an observable impact on the upskilling of SDMs, according to feedback from their direct managers:
Increased interaction and communication between SDMs of different geographies and sectors, and improved communication between SDMs and account executives.

Strengthened level of knowledge, awareness and commitment to Atos standards, methodologies and best practices.

13% increase in strategic thinking skills scores

The grades obtained in oral post-assessments for Senior SDMs conducted by ESCP and Atos, show over 6 years a 13% increase in scores in this cluster of strategic thinking skills.

Decrease in the need to apply escalation protocols.

Contribution to overall customer satisfaction, quality of service delivery and new business opportunities.

Senior SDM upskilling: Participants in the Senior SDM stream evidenced – during the oral follow-up assessment carried out on average 3 months after completing the learning journey – increased understanding of customer business and sector trends.
This has consequently increased sense of partnership between account executives and SDMs.

In its seventh year evidence shows a shift in SDM mindset from an operational focus to a business focus.

The close collaboration between ESCP Business School and Atos, allowing for constant update of contents and certification criteria, ensures that the final certification remains meaningful and valuable for both the organization and the participants.

**SUMMARY**

Career progression impact: 24% of Junior SDMs (with less than 4 years experience) who successfully achieved certification in the program in 2016 had been promoted by first quarter 2018. This percentage of promotions has continued since then, averaging 20 months after completion of program, with disruptions due to Covid.

Financial impact: Higher skilled and certified SDMs allow higher billing rates and is a contributing factor to increase in revenue.

Community impact: Today, Atos SDM Academy Alumni community brings over 500 SDMs together regularly to share experience and best practices, contributing to SDM ongoing learning.
CONCLUDING REMARKS
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Over the last 6 years, both the role of the SDM and the context they work in has changed. Indicators that were established in 2016 may no longer be fully relevant to measure impact on business today.

In the last 6 years 40% of SDM population has moved into different roles, many of which had not been defined in 2016. What has been a constant is that since its launch, the program itself has been regularly reviewed and adapted, in the training needs analysis, contents, and post-assessment tests.

This has required that ESCP program managers and coordinators, trainers, professors and experts involved in the program upgrade regularly their own knowledge of Atos business reality.

In June 2022 Atos SE announced its intention to separate into two publicly listed companies, which could operate independently as strong leaders in their respective distinct markets. This separation, which is still subject to the final approval of Atos SE’s general meeting of shareholders, will allow each of the entities to unleash their full potential and further strengthen and develop their business, service and customer focus.

The SDM Development Program is currently deferred awaiting for the new organizational structure to be confirmed.

A recent survey by Atos SDM Academy among representatives of different cohorts shows that 90% of participants still believe the program achieved the objectives it set out to accomplish.
QUOTE FROM REGION INDUSTRY LEAD MANAGER:

“The SDM Academy Program really helped my teams to improve our collaboration with customers and stakeholders. It combines a helpful set of concrete tools applicable daily, with very good soft skill trainings around communication and personal development.”

Andreas Kopp
VP and Head of Operations – Manufacturing Central Europe

QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT:

“Coupled with my six years of SDM experience, this programme has elevated my understanding and my prospects, giving me a wider perspective of SDM operations. The course exceeded my expectations due to the direct support from professors and staff alike.”

Atchariya Panichakul
Consultant @ Atos Thailand
QUOTE FROM TEAM & ACCOUNT MANAGER:

"Global Media account as part of Telecom, Media and Entertainment.

We took the opportunity of my direct team attending the Atos SDM Academy.

It was a great opportunity for the team to gain understanding of how Atos operates in North America and globally.

The team definitely reaped rewards from the program and so did the account:

- The course challenged those attending – great for personal development.
- Less escalation both internally and externally – the teams are handling things in a more proactive way thus reducing customer escalation.

Greater team collaboration – all team members are more forthcoming with ideas and solutions in internal and external meetings.

Insight into the financials and how Atos operates as a business, increasing understanding of the importance of verifying resources, ensuring correct level of revenue, with cost and margin applied to all activities."

Deborah Lambson
Senior Director EUC Services @ Disney