



Building a culture of
collaboration, through
action learning.

At scale.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norway's financial services group DNB entered the 2020s on a high note of best-ever quarterly performance; a highly diverse workforce; and great strides in rolling out innovative services. Nonetheless, its top management was conscious that the company needed to strengthen the way it collaborated along functional and divisional lines. The challenge of sustaining the group's position of competitiveness and strength, built on continually launching and improving end-to-end customer solutions, demanded that DNB up its game in working as One DNB.

Teaming up with IMD - a long-term partner known for highly customized interventions, DNB committed to an action-learning approach. The goal was to engage leaders at all levels simultaneously and at scale - as a single cohort of 230. This aimed to trigger collective insights and new best practices for collaborating. The central vehicle was shadowing, i.e., observing a peer from another department interact with their teams and customers, conduct meetings, solve problems, and innovate. Supported

by 28 coaches (IMD coaches and DNB coaches who underwent a train-the-trainer session), this silent observation crafted new insights, habits, and behaviors that were transferred across business units. Steadily chipping away at barriers to collaboration, the learning progressed from the self ("I") to pairs ("You"), to cross-functional teams ("We"), and was ultimately applied to the entire organization ("One DNB").

DNB's leaders have emerged from the journey with a renewed sense of empathy across business units - a recognized key ingredient of collaborating effectively. The program's design allowed them to experience and understand the many ways in which the actions of the "I" affect the other parts of the organization. They now view DNB as a dynamic, living organism that changes in tandem with its teams and employees.

Thanks to this new understanding of the bigger company picture, 11 months after the program 2/3 of participants say they are better equipped both to make process improvements and to contribute to more effective end-to-end customer journeys. 91% are collaborating better across the organization; while 86% are using specific learning content in their day-to-day work. Equally encouragingly, many are taking the initiative to continue pair shadowing with colleagues and internal customers.

