Silver Winners | Category: Leadership Development

Credit Agricole Ukraine | KROK Business School, KROK University

Building Resilient Leaders in a Time of Crisis: The Case of Credit Agricole Ukraine and KROK Business School

In the Eye of the Storm: Why Resilient Leadership Matters More Than Ever In times of war, when it seems that the system is falling, it is people who become the main capital of both companies and the country.
Amid the war in Ukraine, Credit Agricole and KROK Business School launched in Kyiv a bold leadership programme to foster resilience, emotional intelligence, and innovation. The initiative, developed under constant uncertainty, resulted in tangible business impact and a cultural shift in leadership. Here's how it happened – and why it earned international recognition.

When the ground is shaking under the feet of Ukrainian business, only resilient leadership can keep it afloat. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in 2022, businesses have been tested beyond measure. Electricity vanished for hours, sirens cut through meetings, and stress shadowed every decision. Yet, amid this turbulence, Credit Agricole Ukraine made a powerful choice: to invest in people. From that conviction, a transformative partnership with KROK Business School emerged.

The 2024 Managerial School is a bold, human-centred leadership programme designed to respond to crisis and reimagine what leadership means under pressure.

A Strategy Born from Necessity and Uncertainty, Shaped by Vision

During wartime, Credit Agricole Bank prioritised internal growth by investing in its people.

To stay resilient amid disruption, leadership set a bold goal: develop 80% of future leaders from within. This was more than a target—it was a shift in mindset toward empowering empathetic, creative, and strategic leadership.

Top management played an active role throughout the programme.

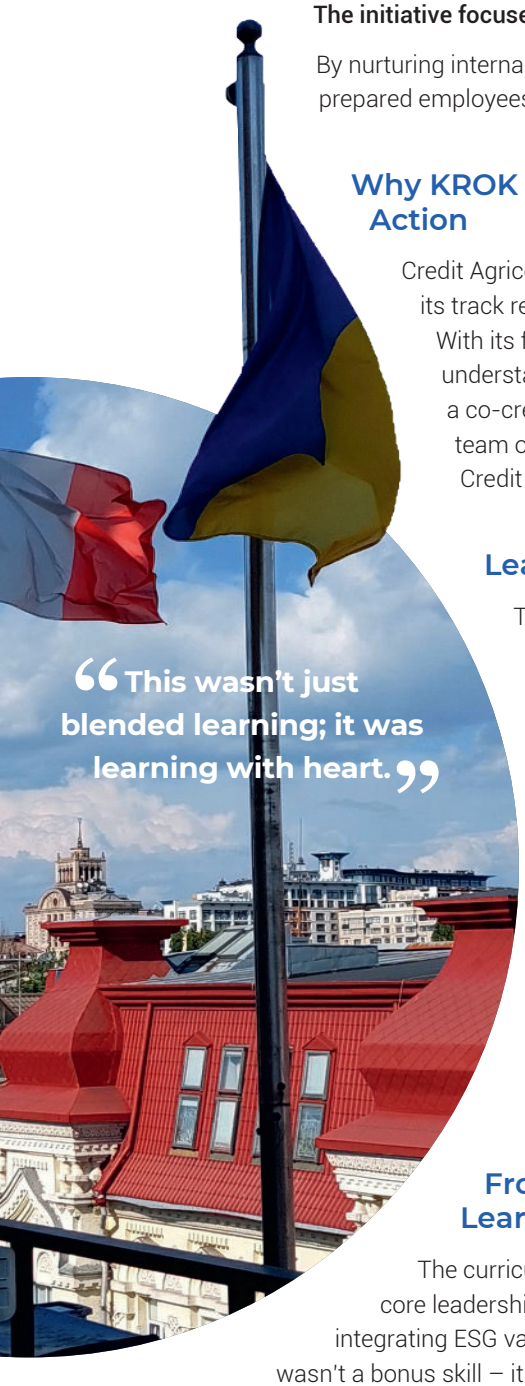
They conducted interviews to align goals, delivered motivational speeches, mentored participants, and served as jury members during the AI hackathon in November 2024.

The initiative focused on long-term impact.

By nurturing internal talent, the Bank ensured continuity, strengthened strategic alignment, and prepared employees to lead in the face of uncertainty.

Why KROK Business School? Because Understanding Precedes Action

Credit Agricole didn't choose its partner lightly. KROK Business School stood out not just for its track record but for its philosophy: that leadership development is a deep human journey. With its flexibility, ability to adapt to various formats, social responsibility ethos, and deep understanding of Ukrainian realities, KROK Business School wasn't just a vendor – it was a co-creator of the training programme. Guided by KROK Business School's mission, the team of highly qualified trainers designed and developed a customised programme for Credit Agricole Bank, meeting the needs of the client.



Learning during Crisis

The Managerial School unfolded over seven months, it was more than a schedule – it was a mutually beneficial experience. Twenty-eight emerging leaders, each with their individual voice, expertise and vision, came together across four offline modules, five live webinars, homework tasks, and immersive company visits. The journey culminated in Ukraine's first AI hackathon in the banking sector – a daring expression of innovation in uncertain times.

This wasn't just blended learning; it was learning with heart. KROK Business School trainers demonstrated the ability to respond quickly to the audience's requests and diverse questions. During each module, under the wail of air raid sirens and power outages, not just new knowledge was born, but trust - between participants and trainers, in themselves, and in the future.

When classrooms moved to shelters because of the threat of air attack, learning continued. Each module was adapted in real time to meet business needs and human ones as well.

From Concepts to Capabilities: What Participants Actually Learned

The curriculum created by KROK Business School team of trainers flowed seamlessly through core leadership dimensions. Participants explored the art of motivating people under stress, integrating ESG values, managing time wisely, and cultivating self-awareness. Emotional regulation wasn't a bonus skill – it was essential. Communication wasn't about PowerPoints — it was about trust, clarity, and resilience.

What made the difference? The continuity between learning and doing. Participants in practice tested each theory. Each workshop was tied directly to workplace realities. Instead of lectures, leaders solved problems, shared insights, and grew stronger together.

Innovation Isn't a Buzzword. It's a Survival Skill.

Nothing captured the spirit of the programme more vividly than the AI hackathon. In small teams, participants rolled up their sleeves, designed real prototypes, and pitched them to decision-makers. One winning solution is already headed for implementation in 2025. But more than the outcome, it was the energy – the message that even during war, ideas matter, action is possible.

How Resilience Was Built into the Design

Challenges didn't just appear – they shaped the process. Participants juggled managerial duties with study, navigated blackouts, and paused for air alarms. Yet the programme didn't break – it bent and flexed. Moodle hosted all content. Offline sites were equipped with shelters.

Rather than being disrupted by war, the programme became a case study in adaptive leadership. That flexibility wasn't accidental – it was baked into the design from day one.

What Changed? Everything That Matters.

At the end of the programme, 95% of participants reported applying new knowledge in their daily roles. Teams communicated more clearly, handled conflict better, and acted with greater confidence. Seventeen participants are now in line for leadership roles – the first step toward meeting the bank's ambitious internal promotion goal. More importantly, participants became catalysts. They sparked change around them: mentoring others, proposing innovations, and holding space for resilience in their teams.

The numbers tell part of the story – a Net Promoter Score of 92%, and sharp growth in trust indicators across the bank. The true impact lies in the quiet moments, such as a manager listening more deeply, a team functioning more fluidly, and a workplace holding steady amid chaos.

Human-Centred approach

What set the Managerial School apart – and earned it a prestigious Silver Award – was its unwavering commitment to human-centred transformation.

The Human Thread: Why This Programme Won Silver

What set the Managerial School apart – and earned it a prestigious Silver Award – was its unwavering commitment to human-centred transformation. This wasn't a programme about climbing corporate ladders. It was about a human-centred approach.

Leadership was reframed as service. Authority was

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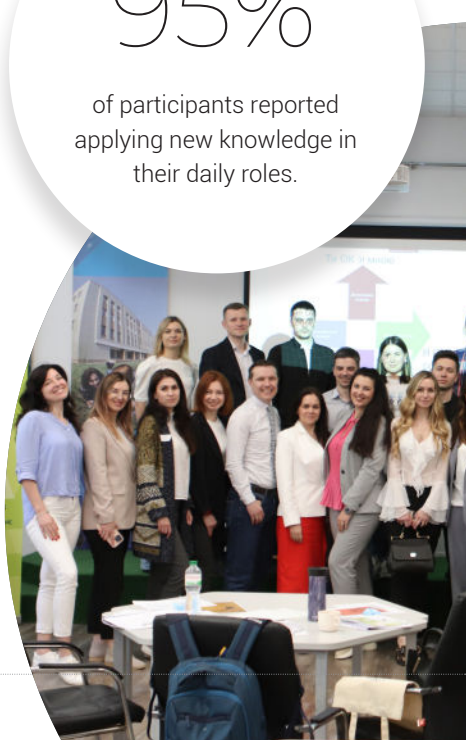

balanced with empathy. Emotional intelligence took its place alongside strategic acumen. In doing so, a culture began to shift.

The Road Ahead: Expanding the Horizon

The story isn't over. Inspired by this success, Credit Agricole and KROK Business School have already launched a renewed version of the programme for a fresh cohort of 30 leaders. The new modules dive into personal effectiveness, self-reflection, resilience, digital transformation, design thinking, AI integration, and strategic data use – arming managers with tools and vision as well.

As Ukraine builds its future, leaders will need more than survival skills. They will need imagination, courage, creativity, and the ability to turn uncertainty into momentum.

Final Thoughts: Leadership as a Legacy

In a time when leadership training often feels transactional, this programme stood out as deeply transformational. It combined rigour with relevance, innovation with empathy, and business outcomes with personal growth.

The 2024 Managerial School was a commitment to people, purpose, and to the possibility of better leadership, even in the darkest hour. For other organisations watching from the sidelines, this case offers more than inspiration. It offers a roadmap.

The Managerial School is now becoming a blueprint for future programmes in crisis environments. As Ukraine moves forward, the value of human-centred, adaptive leadership is clearer than ever.

> This case is not only a success story – it's a call to action for business schools and companies worldwide. Never give up! This programme is no longer just an educational product. It is an example of leadership of a new generation. Leadership that is humane and courageous.

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