



**With annual sales of €6.5 billion, Bayer CropScience is one of the world's leading cropscience companies in the area of crop protection, seed treatment, plant biotechnology and non-agricultural pest-control. Headquartered in Monheim, Germany, the organisation has 18,300 employees and is represented in more than 120 countries.**

**developing strategic marketing understanding and skills**



# Global marketing with Bayer CropScience

## Bayer CropScience: Global Marketing Academy (GMA)

### the challenge

As an organisation with a strong science base, Bayer CropScience had a tradition of being very focused on both products and technology, with its employees having very strong technical backgrounds. While this was a clear strength, it was recognised by senior management that to flourish in an increasingly competitive marketplace, there needed to be greater emphasis put on the customer through both sales and research and development. The mindset, approach and value proposition of the organisation needed to evolve, putting marketing at the heart of the business. To do this, Bayer wanted to work with an international business school that could help to develop its global community of more than 1,000 marketing personnel from over 40 countries, within a two to three year timescale.

### the design

In June 2007, Ashridge Business School began working with Bayer CropScience to design a programme that would reach out to its dispersed marketing community. The first step was to truly understand the unique characteristics of the organisation, its culture and how its international business operated. This was done through a series of intensive briefings with Friedrich Gruber and his team from Marketing and Business Excellence, who

shared documents, case histories and internal reports with the Ashridge team.

A seven-person international steering group, which met regularly, comprising members from Bayer CropScience and Ashridge, was established to oversee the diagnostic steps and design of the programme. The diagnostic process involved a team of four Ashridge tutors who interviewed more than 40 Bayer CropScience managers. Face to face interviews took place at the Bayer CropScience head office in Germany and telephone interviews were carried out with executives from North America, South America and Asia. The pilot took place in December 2007 to test the teaching material and methodologies. The pilot participants were selected under two criteria. Half were senior executives, including Rüdiger Scheitza, Head of Portfolio Development and a Board Member.

It was essential that senior executives were aware of the detail of the experience that their teams would undergo – their role was also to advise and help us to focus on business priorities. The remainder were marketing and sales managers from Argentina, Canada, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, UK and USA. Their responses to the sessions, exercises, discussion themes and action planning guided us in refining the first Global Marketing Academy (GMA) which took place in January 2008.

**“Without this initiative, there is no doubt that change would have been significantly slower, and some of the specific outcomes from the programmes – which include initiatives on segmentation, stronger customer loyalty platforms, and our downstream foodchains focus – would not be where they are today.”**

Friedrich Gruber, Global Head of Marketing and Business Excellence

**“Ashridge’s understanding of our business and industry has made the GMA truly outstanding. The impact is far reaching – changing internal perceptions of marketing, increasing our commercial effectiveness in capturing value, and supporting the evolution of a common marketing culture in Bayer CropScience.”**

Friedrich Gruber  
Global Head of Marketing and Business Excellence

### participants say...

“The GMA really was a very good opportunity to improve and build on current marketing knowhow, but its real value can only be realised once it is applied in the workplace. A great experience.”

“I am very happy to have participated in this programme - and to work in a company that invests in it.”

“The GMA is an excellent course to update knowledge on various aspects of marketing. It is a very valuable programme to revise certain marketing activities.”

### the delivery

The GMA's are an interactive experience taking around 30 participants per programme through the development of marketing strategy. Participants review their business context, carry out practical exercises in market and customer analysis, create value propositions and consider ways to influence effective implementation.

Each GMA uses a blend of learning approaches including marketing syllabus input, external business examples, company case histories, best practice sharing and interactive exercises. Action planning is a key component of the programme and relationships are established with the line managers of all participants to ensure effective follow up.

There are typically 8-10 nationalities on each programme, which has been delivered at locations around the world including Ashridge, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Singapore and Tokyo. Each programme is

tailored to take account of the diverse global needs of the organisation through regional case studies and examples, multi-language exercises and simultaneous translation where necessary. The programme has been delivered in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese.

One of the aims of the GMA is to spread the use of marketing best practice. To encourage participants to find and apply this after the programme, Bayer CropScience has an online database of best practice. Ashridge has worked closely with them to provide additional online content, with the case studies from other industries being researched by the Ashridge Library. The cases and other resources help to reinforce the learning and development of Bayer's marketing professionals, prompting them to consider how they might apply the practices to their own business areas.

### the difference

The GMA has been highly effective in translating marketing best practice and applying it to the organisation's real issues and challenges. Significant changes at Bayer CropScience have been accelerated by the GMA. For example there is a greater customer centricity. New approaches to creating customer insight are being used and global marketing functions have become more closely aligned. There is now a shared view, along with common terminology and standard tools, and marketing has established itself as a driver in shaping the organisation's future business models. With over 500 people having gone through the GMA, the process has enabled large groups to learn and to develop their marketing leadership.



Developing leaders,  
driving performance,  
delivering results

  
**ASHRIDGE**  
business school