



Under Simon Francis' leadership, a number of internal promotions were made whilst he built the management team of Dechra Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing & Supply (DPM&S), and he also recruited a number of new team members from outside the Dechra Group. As part of bringing this team together to perform at their best, a progressive approach to leadership development was implemented.

The development programme's strategic intent was:

- to develop fit for purpose senior leadership by improving readiness and capabilities that deliver success; and
- building confidence for internal and external stakeholders that the business has access to talented, ready now and emerging leaders.

The key learning objectives of the programme for the team are to build on executional excellence, develop the capacity to build and establish value creating teams, have an agile and future facing leadership, and continue to focus on having an inclusive approach and being culturally aware.

As the programme content was being developed, the pandemic broke out and the brunt of the impact of COVID-19 fell on the DPM&S leadership team as they managed to maintain site operations throughout. Keeping our people safe through the constantly changing working environment was the number one priority, together with maintaining supply of vital products to our customers. During this difficult time the team sadly lost their leader, colleague and friend Simon Francis to COVID-19.

Following the appointment of Milton McCann into the Interim Manufacturing Director role it was agreed that investing in the team was even more important now. Although, now no longer able to meet face to face to undergo planned development sessions, delivery of the programme has transitioned to a digital platform. This has been co-designed with Create Express using a variety of leading edge tools including gamification, social learning, learn and unlearn techniques, forming excellence as a habit and broadening business acumen.

Moving the programme into the virtual realm, for 16 people, across four time zones and six global locations together with keeping business as usual running during a pandemic has been no mean feat. The launch of the programme took place at the start of June, commencing with psychometric and cognitive assessments of the team, and has been followed by online team business simulations, team and peer coaching and virtual content which will continue to be delivered during the rest of 2020.

Kevin Villalongo, who joined the Company as the Site Director at Fort Worth on 16 March 2020 said: "This programme has enabled me to meet the team virtually, gain a rapid understanding of the skills I need for the future and has shown me that the Company wants to invest in me, especially at this time which is really encouraging. Facing our future together is really positive."

Catherine Dent, Group HSE Director commented: "It's been great that we have been able to continue with our personal and team development throughout the pandemic. Over the last few months many things have been paused due to our response to the global crisis, therefore it demonstrated real commitment from Dechra and it was exciting when we received our invitations to the virtual Leadership Development programme. In addition to learning more things about ourselves and our own development areas, doing this virtually also helps us to adapt to new remote ways of working

Our People

Talent Management and Engagement 2020 - DPM Leadership Programme



and is helping us reach out across country borders and work more effectively with colleagues. We may not be in the same room but we are all still really connected and having fun."

The programme is being designed using an iterative approach which enables the team and individual inputs to be tailored based on the initial stages. The next steps for the programme are to roll out a similar model to the emerging leaders across DPM&S and, where appropriate, to other key functional groups across the Group.