



TeamFactory

How Solvay and Team Academy
Created an In-Company Learning Environment
That Learns by Itself



Etienne Collignon, Solvay HR Knowledge Capture Leader and President TeamFactory, and
Johannes Partanen, Head Coach and Founder of Team Academy, University of Applied
Sciences of Jyväskylä, Finland,
celebrating the 15e anniversary of Team Academy, January 2008

Summary

TeamFactory is a non-profit organization created in Paris with the support of Solvay, a chemical and pharmaceutical company. TeamFactory is developing the team entrepreneur spirit, with the model and tools created by **Team Academy**, a school of entrepreneurs in Finland.

The cooperation between **Solvay** and Team Academy grew from the idea that the model validated by Team Academy in Finland to create team entrepreneurs is crucial for the future of a big company.

Apart of the benefits taken by Solvay on one hand and Team Academy on the other hand, that cooperation has now one common and sustainable project: TeamFactory the creation and development of new programmes to accompany team entrepreneurs in Paris.

For Solvay the creation of TeamFactory has meaning in various domains, among others: reputation, hiring, learning and innovation processes, leadership and entrepreneurship new initiatives, sustainable development policy.

For Team Academy, the benefit of the cooperation is to have new opportunities of developing international programmes and reputation.

I - The Script and Actors

Compiling the Script - Finding the Best Practices to Learn Quicker and Better

Team Academy started in 1993 as a small, experimental pilot in Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences' classroom number 147. 24 eager students and coach Johannes Partanen wanted to learn marketing in practice by doing projects to local businesses and earn money to travel around the world. Traditional lectures and other school practices were abolished. They were replaced with intensive team training sessions and real-life projects. In 1996 the team made its trip-around-the-world. After that new teams have started at the rate of 2 to 3 teams per year. The pilot has been transformed into a special unit of team entrepreneurship. Since 1993 over 500 students have graduated from Team Academy earning Bachelor's Degree in Business and Economics. 50 teams have been coached and over 2000 projects have been done. Over 500 adults have been also coached in adult education programs and things learnt during the past 15 years have been pictured as theoretical frameworks and practices that can be transferred to different organizations.

Team Academy is a school that learns. Its pedagogical principles are deeply rooted in the practices of learning organization. Individuals learn and operate in teams. Learning is social and practical. The grand idea is that when individuals learn, the whole organization may learn and develop. Although strictly speaking only living beings with intelligence have the ability to learn, in Team Academy it truly feels that organizations can learn too – each year new innovations and practices are born in Team Academy and the network it is operating in.

In 2002, a **learning manager of Solvay**, Etienne Collignon, was in search of the best learning practices in the world in order to enrich the Solvay learning processes. He was very much influenced by the idea developed by Peter Senge: a learning organization is an organization where people and teams learn quicker and better than competitors.

Hearing of the reputation of Team Academy, considered as a model of “learning organization”, he made his first visit there with the support of Solvay.

There he met Johannes Partanen, and coaches and students.

After that first visit, Etienne progressively introduced new learning models and methods inside Solvay, in practice in Team Academy, such as: Innovation in team, team dialogue, learning groups, world café, networking... Hundreds of executives, managers and blue collars have taken advantage of one or the other of these methods. The transfer was facilitated by the openness of the source of the knowledge, Team Academy, always ready to freely share her knowledge and experience.

In 2005, Etienne started to introduce the global model in Paris, as a way to play a role against unemployment and for the future of young people. A non-profit organization called **TeamFactory** was created, with the support of Region Ile de France, companies and organizations. Solvay immediately encouraged the initiative with founding, competence support and housing the first teams.

The initiative was strongly supported and appreciated by Team Academy, whose European influence is growing rapidly: units using her model have been emerging in the last months not only in Paris, but also in London, Bilbao, Mondragon, Harlem and Amsterdam, Essen, Strasbourg and Angers, and in Slovenia.

Actors - Collaboration Partners

Team Academy is Finland's Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences' special unit of team-entrepreneurship. It was founded in 1993 and has operated for over 15 years. Team Academy educates both students in bachelor-level programs and entrepreneurs in further education programs. It uses innovative and radical pedagogical approaches and practices of learning organization – such as team-learning, action learning and coaching - to create entrepreneurship and to develop entrepreneur' competencies. Team Academy has won numerous prizes for its methods such as Finland's Ministry of Education's Unit of Quality.



Team Academy in Finland, organizing a meeting with young European entrepreneurs in January 2008

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical Group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs some 29,000 people in 50 countries. In 2006, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 9.4 billion, generated by its three sectors of activity: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals.

A fractal of Team Academy in Paris, supported by Solvay, Région Ile de France and 30 individuals, companies and organizations, **TeamFactory** is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting team entrepreneurship in Paris. It contributes to individual and team development in a vision of a sustainable world.



TeamFactory leaders Etienne Collignon (right) and Danièle Darmouni meeting with founders of the concept of Learning Organization: Otto Scharmer, creator of the famous Model U (left), Peter Senge (author of The Fifth discipline) and Arie de Geus (author of The Living Company).

II - The Play - Innovation in practice

The Multifaceted Play: Team Academy's Social Innovations

Although normally Team Academy is considered to be an organization, there is much more to it. It is a multifaceted social innovation that combines of organizational structure, social community, unique culture, radical pedagogical approaches and innovative practices together. Team Academy has been created in the context of team-entrepreneurship education, although parts of it (practices, for example) can be used in variety of contexts (team-working in business environments, for example).

Teams and Experiments: The Powerhouses of Individuals', Organizations' and Networks' Learning

The core innovation of Team Academy is about assisting individuals to learn faster by using teams and real-life experiments as tools. Being part of team helps the individual to share knowledge, get emotional support (encouragement) from peers, get work done more efficiently with others and solve complex problems that require lots of knowledge to be solved. Real-life experiments allow the individual to observe how their ideas and things learnt with other team members work in practice. This way individual can learn by doing and bring his experiences back to his/her team to be shared to other team members. The alternation between team learning and real-life experimentation forms a cycle of learning and development. This learning cycle leads to development of individual's entrepreneurial competencies and professional identity in the long run.

Individuals' learning has tendency to affect their operational environments (schools, universities, business units, etc). Individuals' whole team - and the organization that it is part of – start to “learn” and develop. Thus a learning organization (such as Team Academy or TeamFactory) is created. And when many organizations and communities start to use similar practices and share knowledge, a learning network (such as Team Academy European Network) is born.

Innovations That Get the Learning Cycle Rolling

In order to get the learning cycle working, different kinds of innovations are needed. In Team Academy these innovations vary from concrete how-to-do-practices to more abstract ideas and theories. Innovations are such concepts (to name a few) as Guiding Ideas (mission, vision, values and principles), Learning Contract (individual's learning and development plan), Rocket Model (theoretical framework), Team Training Session (team learning sessions where dialogue is used as main learning practice and that are facilitated by a coach), Coaching (coach helps the team and its members to learn by facilitating team training sessions) and Forums (community and network meetings with lots of social interaction).

Organizations, communities and networks other than Team Academy can apply these concepts to their operational environments or modify them to suit their needs. All of these concepts are created and developed using the newest theoretical knowledge on learning organizations, management, learning, innovation, sustainable development, marketing, strategy, team-work and entrepreneurship. The idea is to find useful theoretical knowledge (new management theories, for example) and rapidly apply it to the organization to test its real-life usefulness. After testing, things learnt are diffused to other parts of the organization or to a larger network. This is metadevelopment: concepts themselves also develop in learning organization.

TeamFactory: The Platform for Future World

Team Factory's innovative practices serve two purposes: one is to inspire the growth of Solvay; another is to leverage the next generation entrepreneurship education environment in Paris.

TeamFactory as Solvay's Leadership Laboratory at Corporate level

Solvay is in quest of the future way of working and operating. These ways of working (management practices, for example) need a testing and development place. In a holistic vision, TeamFactory is Solvay's laboratory for entrepreneurship. The main idea is to have a platform where Team Academy's methods, practices and ideas can be further developed, very close to Solvay's environment. After testing them in the laboratory, best ones can be transferred to business environment of Solvay.

Both Team Academy and TeamFactory use unique and innovative theories, models and tools that have been developed in Team Academy. They have been created using the most advanced theories and tools in the domains of leadership, entrepreneurship, knowledge management, innovation, sustainable development, marketing, strategy and learning. Also, every model and tool has been tested in practice in the context of entrepreneurship to validate their effectiveness in real-life situations.

TeamFactory as Next Generation Entrepreneurship Education Environment in Paris

Although Solvay is an important collaborator to TeamFactory the larger mission reaches beyond one organization. In addition to its laboratory role TeamFactory is a “next generation” educational environment. Its purpose is to assist young people to learn and develop their entrepreneurial and managerial competencies in order to get employed and succeed in the world of the future.

TeamFactory has now been working for nearly 2 years. The list of activities covers a large number of projects.

- Level of Discovery: Offer reflection and progress situations to discover team entrepreneurship and master one’s future (2 days sessions; short coaching sessions...).
- Level of Professionalism: Accompany people to reach a level of practice as team entrepreneurs (9 or 18 month programmes).
- Level of Expertise: Prepare leaders or organizations to have high success with their social project, using the learning model of Team Academy (short sessions or long development programmes).
- Level of System: accompany organizations in redefining their educational and entrepreneurial project to make it more efficient for the people they are supporting (Supervision of leaders).

III - Accolades – Collaboration’s Impacts

Impacts at Micro-level

Impact on Solvay – Change Acceleration and Inspiring Example

There is a variety of models, thoughts and tools coming from Team Academy that have been transferred to Solvay in 6 years.



Creativity tools and large groups meeting methods used in leveraging Innovation processes at Solvay. The photos show members of the personnel in a Solvay unit working on 20 ideas of new products;



Creativity with Solvay clients



Solvay is organizing Forums on Sustainable Development with the all 30.000 members of the personnel, in groups of 50 people. The Forums are co-facilitated by management and trade-union representatives. They are using tools from Team Academy: Dialogue workshops, large group creativity, World Café...

TeamFactory is a driver of internal and external image of commitment in Sustainable development and entrepreneurship

TeamFactory is inspiring the strategy of Solvay. At the moment, Solvay executives are in the process of defining Solvay as learning organization, to support the challenges of Sustainable Development.

TeamFactory is giving models for dialogue between stake holders.

TeamFactory is accelerating change.

TeamFactory is a provider of external services at lower prices

The commitment of Solvay in supporting TeamFactory:

- Founding: 15.000 € per year
- Competency transfer: several managers helping the development of the project
- Housing the first teams: offices in Paris, IT material and support ...
- Executives committed in Founding conference and events.
- First missions for Solvay asked to first team entrepreneurs of TeamFactory.

Impact on Team Academy, Know-how and knowledge on Starting a Pilot Abroad and Recognition from a Major Company

Team Academy has gained a lot from the collaboration. Both TeamFactory's operation and Etienne Collignon's direct applications of Team Academy's practices to Solvay have been new and fresh experiments of transferring Team Academy's practices. These have been the first steps in Team Academy's strategy to transfer its methods and practices to European Union countries other than Finland.

Starting of TeamFactory has given Team Academy "internal drive": a few years ago it was believed to be almost impossible to cross Finland's borders and export the methods (or any other pedagogical innovation created in Finland) abroad. TeamFactory as a pilot has shown it is possible. This internal drive has created lots of motivation and action to export methods further to Europe.

TeamFactory's starting phases has created a lot of knowledge on how to start an educational unit similar to Team Academy in a cultural background different from Finnish culture. These things learnt are for example: how to create a collaboration between a major company and an educational unit to provide funding to the pilot (in Finland most schools are government funded), what kind of training is needed to be given to the coaches who start the pilot and what kinds of different roles there are in the "core group" that starts the pilot.

Collaboration has also given Team Academy recognition from a major European company, Solvay, which has a long heritage. This has been an "image boost" to Team Academy and has also raised the self-confidence of all Team Academy members in a "We can do it!" – way.

Collaboration's Impacts on Macro-Level

Added value for Team Academy European network

TeamFactory as a place to learn in Paris, open to all Team entrepreneurs in all units. Solvay supports the meetings of the European network.

Added value for Paris Region

Action for Employment: effectiveness criteria established: in 2011, 300 people will have learned from TeamFactory in Paris, and deeply improved their professional life.

Action for Education: the transfer of knowledge from Finland to Paris has started; several schools, dedicated to learning agriculture, or IT, or HR and management, are experimenting the learning methods of team Academy. The knowledge is freely offered to all organizations that want to use it; the school leaders are starting to share their learning and contribute to the development of the network of learners.

IV - After the Play - Learning arising from the collaboration

We learned a lot through this long process of making a new organization like TeamFactory emerge in order to leverage the growth of a big company like Solvay:

- Introducing a global change model takes years in a big Group.
- In big organizations, important change does not always come from the top. It may come from individuals and small team that make experiments.
- Team Academy is giving birth to management practices with 3 to 5 years in advance comparing to the time schedule of a big Group. That is true in domains such as: entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, partnerships, open innovation, social change.
- Team Academy is a “weak signal” of the learning organization for the 21st century. Too few leaders of traditional organizations are capable of observing these seeds for future. It is crucial to reveal the new processes for leadership, innovation and sustainable development. Having young team entrepreneurs deeply living this new social and economic world very close to the old traditional gig company is helping a lot the necessary changes that we have to introduce.

V - Encores - The future of the cooperation between Solvay and Team Academy

Solvay will go on supporting TeamFactory.

Team Academy with her European network will grow internationally.

TeamFactory will be the place for experimentation and creation of new knowledge for both parts.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Team Academy Fact File

- Special unit of team entrepreneurship Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences
- Founder: Johannes Partanen in 1993.
- Annual budget (for education): 0,5 million €, 100% government funded (as are all other schools in Finland).
- Four full-time coaches and additional part-time coaches and experts as needed. Administration is done by the parent organization, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences.
- Main learning methods are team learning and learning by doing. They are supported with theory studies and coaching. Pedagogy is a modification of radical socioconstructivism and exploratory learning. All methods have been developed in the context of entrepreneurial development and are "home-made".
- Students in BBA programs: approx. 170 learners in 8 teams who will graduate as Bachelors of Business Administration during 3-3,5 year learning path. Each year approx. 60 students start their studies and the same amount graduates.
- Team academy's teams operate as independent co-operative companies.
- Adult learning programs include over 200 students. These programs consist of further education for adults in the areas of entrepreneurship and management. Programs have been outsourced to Taitovire Valmennus Ltd.

Appendix 2: Team Academy's Track Record - References

Universities Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Innoakatemia, Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences (1999)

Proakatemia, Tampere University of Applied Sciences (2000)

Team Academy Jämsänkoski (2001)

Business Akatemia, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences (2002)

Media-akatemia, Pirkanmaa University of Applied Sciences, Virrat (2002)

Turku University of Applied Sciences, Unit of Health Care and Well Being, Beauty Care programme (2002)

Oiva-akatemia, Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences (2006)

Kiihdyttämö - incubator, Joensuu University of Applied Sciences (2006)

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, Savonlinna unit (2007)

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, incubator project for all schools (2007-2009)

Organizations Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Valtra Inc, development of sales units, all Finnish sales units, 400 persons (2000-2001)

Jyväskylän Energia, creating practices of learning organization for a energy company, the whole organization (1997-1998)

Kyyhkylä War Veterans' Hospital, transforming the hospital into geriatric service center (1997-1998)

Ahlström-Mikrolli Inc, transforming electronics factory's organization model into team organization (1998-1999)

Sampo-Leonia Bank Helsinki-Kaivokatu & Jyväskylä, transforming banks' units into team-organized service centers (2000-2001)

Casalinda Business Network, creating a learning network alliance from individual design industry companies in Vammala (2001-2003)

Wärtsilä Inc, coaching company's finance management staff to operate as team (2006-2007)

Vocational Institutes Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Turku Vocational Institute (2001)

Soteka Team School, Jyväskylä Vocational Institute (2002)

YOPPI -entrepreneurship environments, Jyväskylä / Jämsä / Äänekoski (2003)

Taidosto, Ikaalinen College of Crafts and Design (2004)

Raahe Vocational Institute for Further Education (2004)

"Firestones" and "Radical Coaches" -programs, Joensuu Vocational Institute for Further Education (2005-2006)

Adult Education Programs Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

MBA (1996 - , 30 graduates)

TOVA, Coaching Program for Youth Workers (1997-2000, 260 graduates)

Firesouls, Further Qualification for Entrepreneurs Degree Programme (2002-, 148 graduates, 95 on education in autumn 2007)

"Journey", Coaching Program for Managers with Philosopher Esa Saarinen (2002-2004, 10 graduates)

Firetorch, Special Qualification for Entrepreneurs Programme (2003-, 99 graduates, 69 on education in autumn 2007)
 Team Master, Further Qualification for Managers Degree Programme (2005-, 35 graduates, 34 on education in autumn 2007)
 Team Mastery, Coach-the-Coach Program for Coaches abroad Finland (2006, 1. programme ongoing)
 Smiths of Sampo, Further Qualification for Developers Degree Programme (2007, 1. and 2. programmes with total 27 persons)

International Organizations Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Learning House, London, United Kingdom (2004)
 Team Factory, Paris, France (2006)
 Team Entrepreneur, Angers, France (2007)
 Team Academie Nederland, Amsterdam and Haarlem, Netherlands (2007)
 Team Academy Euskadi, Bilbao, Spain (2007)
 Team Entrepreneur, Strassbourg, France (2007)
 Team Academy Essen, Germany (starts in 2008)

Incubators and Networks Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Intotalo incubator and community, Kajaani (2001-)
 Y4, regional entrepreneurship development program, Region of Central Finland (2002-)
 Crazy Town entrepreneurship community, Jyväskylä (2003-)
 Pukkila Design Forum entrepreneurship community (2004-)
 Muurame Young Entrepreneurs' Club Houses (2004-)

Special Education and Training Programs Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Team Academy Leadership Program (2001-, over 150 graduates)
 Marketer's Path (2001-, over 120 graduates)
 Young Leader Programme, in co-operation with high-schools
 Team Academy has helped several co-operatives in their starting phases in schools and learning environments since 1998.

Awards Won with the Help of (or Due To) Methods Developed in Team Academy

Quality Award from Ministry of Education (2000)
 Iron Cross, award for creating innovative learning methods from Chamber of Commerce (2000)
 Productive Idea – award (1997)
 Markkinaseppä -award, award for excellent marketing in Central Finland (1994)
 Young Peoples' Employment Promoter -award, European Union (1999)
 Innosuomi -award, award for innovative practices in Finland (2000)
 Helping Y4 to win a Entrepreneurial Europe -competition's first price (2006)

Network Forums Using Methods Developed in Team Academy

Network Seminars, Conferences and Gatherings

Brainstorm, gatherings for young entrepreneurs, yearly over 500 participants, the biggest young entrepreneurs' event in Finland (2005-)

Firestorm, gatherings for entrepreneurs, four times per year, over 500 participants (2005-)

Coachs' Gathering, gatherings for coaches and educators, two times per year, over 200 coaches (2005-)

Y4, tour for entrepreneurs 2003-2004

International Network Gatherings

Ignition, gathering for young entrepreneurs (2007-)

SoL Conference, both national and international conferences for Society for Organizational Learning, over thousand participants in international conferences (2001-)

Major Projects Completed by Team Academy's Co-Operatives with the Help of Methods Developed in Team Academy

Development of Jyväskylä Pedestrian Street, marketing and sales (1994-1996)

Neste Rally event, marketing and development (1994-1998)

Humane Faced City, service competition between local companies, over 150 participant companies and 80 000 customers (1993-1995)

Network 1996-2001 – Finland's biggest event for polytechnic students, over 6000 participants each year

Service Wave, seminars on good service, over 5000 participants

Founding SoL Organization, with a network of over 400 members (2001)

Over 2000 projects in Team Academy, net income from projects over 6 million euros (from 1993)

Companies Created with the Help of Methods Developed in Team Academy

Festago, Villimieli, Dot, Villinikkarit, Taitovire Valmennus, Plusmode Consulting, Logotakomo, Netura, Aivoteollinen Toimisto, Aivoteollinen Turbiini, Punainen Viima, Troublemakers, Imagenius, Visionikkarit, BusinessArena, Solidi, Moneral, Secco, Siniset Sienet, Idearitsa

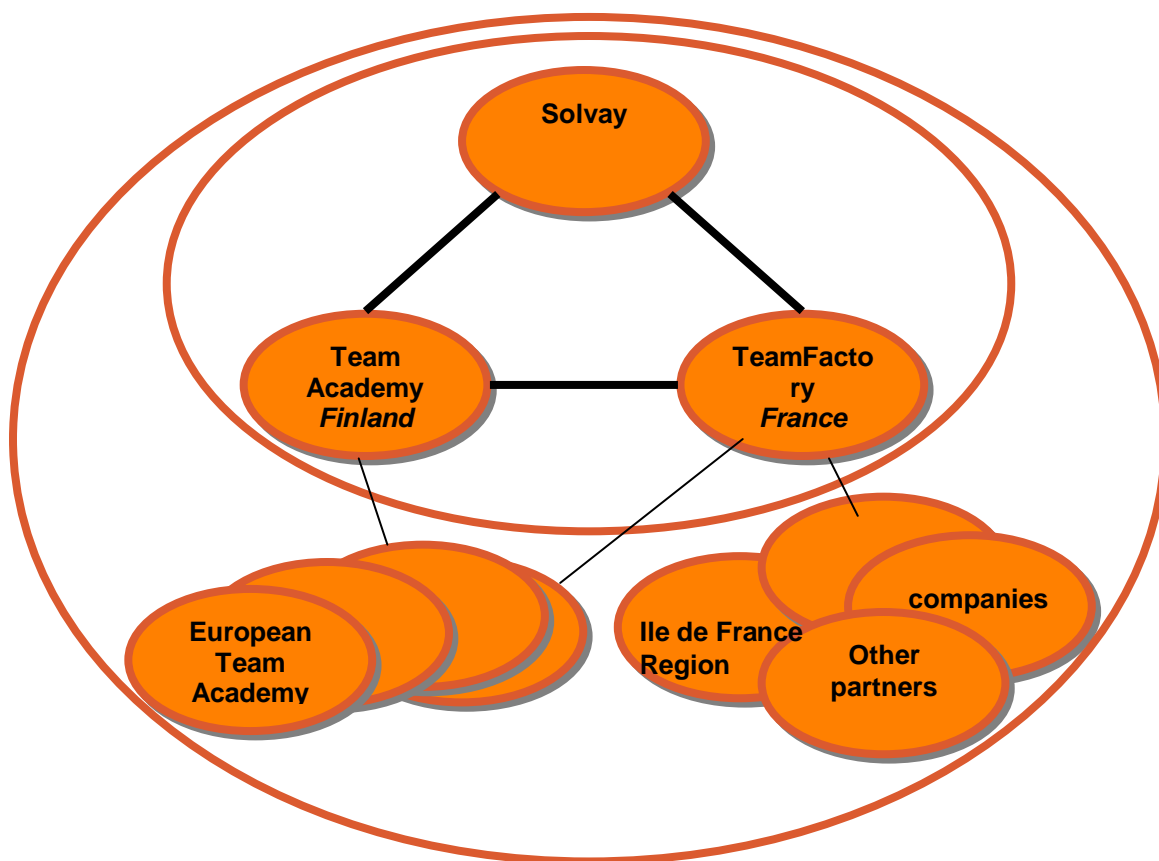
In addition to the previous companies, Team Academy has helped to create over 40 companies during 1993-2007.

Appendice 3 – Bibliography

Among other web sites, books, articles on Team Academy, we recommend the book:

- Niina Leinonen, Johannes Partanen, Petri Palviainen: The Team Academy, A True Story of a Community that Learns by Doing, PS-Kustannus, Finland, 2004?

Appendix 4 - Collaboration Partners and Macro-Level Impact Areas of Collaboration Activity



Picture: Main collaboration partners (Solvay, Team Factory and Team Academy) and Macro-Level Impact Areas of Collaboration Activity (Paris Region and Team Academy European Network).

Appendice 5 – Solvay Growing as a Learning Organization

That map situates the history of management thoughts in Solvay, starting from its creation in the nineteenth century, and growing to a world of Humanity, complexity, systems and collective intelligence. There has been a large variety of progress processes in the last 10 years. They find their coherence in a global concept of “Learning Organization”. Team Academy model shows the way to that future.

