



C&S PARTNERS
MATERIALIZING LEADERSHIP

C&S Partners is 4 years old!



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Stories of 4 Partners at C&S Partners



REALITY

It's already been four years!

Four years since that terrasse in Paris where we first talked about C&S Partners Group. Four years of a great adventure which has seen our network of clients and partners grow to become a very nice community that I look forward to seeing in October. Four years and one professional anecdote: In the early days of 2020, I had the opportunity to support one of our clients in Rio de Janeiro. They were extracting oil and gas with several boats off the coasts of Brazil, as many companies do.

Going to the office in these first days of the year was enjoyable: the sun was shining, and my commute took me along some of the most famous beaches in the world. On the radio, after the traditional news about politics and football, they started talking about a virus in the Far East and the government's plan to send a plane to bring back their nationals.

Then, things started to deteriorate quickly: schools soon closed; people rushed into supermarkets and started wearing mask, gloves—cleaning everything and fearing everyone. News from the rest of the world was not reassuring.

At work, we started sending everyone home, changing the shifts on the boats, managing this new way of working, using new tools...

And then, what had to happen, happened. Despite all the care and safety measures we could implement, a boat got contaminated: 100% people tested, 90% positive, 10% with average or small symptoms, and 80% with no symptoms... And maybe before most of us, I understood the magnitude of the wave that was hitting us.

Not my favorite moment, but definitively a significant experience with C&S Partners.

Fernand



AGILITY

Changing from corporate life to consulting comes with a ton of challenges...and I had a full list to choose from, either as gifts from my new C&S colleagues ("You may want to get familiar with ZZTOP"), or from my ex-corporate buddies ("Are you retiring?").

But the most challenging one was abandoning a 20-year-old resolution: "No PowerPoint unless it's business vital" (hardly happens in HR 😊). Indeed, that was a tough one ... and it still is, nearly 10 months down the road!

My learning, though, is that it's all about context, humility...and talent management—finding the person with the right ppt skills!!

But nothing compared to the classical "just jump in and we'll see if you can swim" fun. Shortly after starting in C&S, one of the founding partners had an emergency and "offered" for me to go and record a live Faster Class "master class" video. No prep, of course: why would I possibly need to prepare anything on Leadership? Despite multiple retakes ("Sorry, Laurence, the metro made a noise. We have to record it again."...5 times), it was a great experience, good fun and a refreshing dive into a start-up-with-a-purpose environment.

My learning: Yes, I can. And frankly, I understood clearly what the C&S moto is about: materializing leadership.

Laurence



LEARNING

Like many teams last year that took advantage of the eased restrictions to finally meet in person, the group from C&S headed to their global headquarters in Biarritz, which conveniently is also home to Gerald. As a welcome, he generously offered some golf lessons with the local golf pro. Initially enthusiastic, little did I know this was to be an existential trial of my deep held beliefs in human potential and development.

Listening attentively to the pro, watching his swing, I said to myself, "I can do this." Club in hand, golf ball teed, I visualized the swing, swung, and roundly missed the ball. Having read all about growth mindsets, I knew this wasn't a test of my innate golf ability, but a signal that I needed to take a different approach, possibly focus more.

While Michel and Melanie happily sent balls soaring down the green, the golf pro helped me with my grip, my stance...my confidence started to return. Knowing that beliefs affect performance, I began thinking, "You've got this." I channeled Amy Cuddy, tried a power pose, readjusted my grip, checked my stance, kept my eye on the ball, swung...and took out a good chunk of the Biarritz golf green, to the amusement of my colleagues and dismay of the pro.

After a few hours of this, I began to despair: maybe I just don't have golfing in me? But as 6pm approached, I realized I was going about this all wrong. I needed to play to my strengths. So, I handed in my clubs and headed off to happy hour.

Marcel



DISCOVERY

Just before I started working for C&S, I had a discussion with Gerald who told me about his academic background and that of Marcel, the two main people I would work with on a daily basis – two ex-Polytechnicians, one specialized in pure mathematics and the other... in logic. I remember thinking at the time "Wow, I'm going to work with Spoke!" And I must say that thought still crosses my mind sometimes.

I work with brilliant people – having studied literature and law, I'm always amazed at how fast some of them can compute and how dexterous they are at handling data when it takes me a lot of effort and concentration to imagine how the workings of their brains work – I think I might need a mind-meld sometimes!

They are also loyal and honest people, but they know how to use exaggeration to provoke debate. I watch with interest these passionate debates about their respective strong opinions on the subjects they embody both internally and with our clients. So even if it sometimes requires taking a bumpy road, I am happy to explore new galaxies with them and to bring my own logic to the table...

Mélanie