

Kasparov Finance & BI doubles its effectiveness



allied forces

Kasparov Finance & BI is an intermediary and consultant that is one of the top players in the South of the Netherlands at the intersection of, as the name suggests, Finance and BI. Due to successive years of significant growth, it was high time for an extra management layer, formed by a Management Team. Mostly young professionals, from whom a strong leadership team had to be forged. Allied Forces took up the gauntlet. “A new collective has emerged.”

This is Kasparov Finance & BI

Kasparov Finance & BI offers knowledge and expertise in the form of recruitment, secondment and consultancy. Growth is the promise in everything the agency does. As they say: “We have the energy and network to take professionals and companies further than they ever thought. Tight in ambition, flexible in handling. Finance and BI have the potential to determine and steer the course; our professionals are at the helm.”

The MT:

Jasper van /Eck, DGA and Interim Manager

Noël Bouman, Interim Manager

Laut van de Sanden, BI Manager

Lenneke Willig, W&S Manager

Rens Verschuren, Careers Manager

Martijn Broekmans, Operations Manager

Each training program is unique, says **Anton van den Berg**, managing partner at Allied Forces. Together with Anne Begeman (behavioral psychologist and specialist in leadership and organizational development) and Rik Uiterwijk (trainer-coach in leadership development), he formed the team that worked for six months with the brand new MT of Kasparov Finance & BI. “A tailor-made trip makes the most impact.”

Goal of the project: to establish a team of leaders who take ownership and create a culture of connection. **Anton:** “High Performing Leadership, we call it at Allied Forces. To do this, you have to develop leadership in people themselves, and the skills to convey this to the teams below. How do you involve people in a mission without always pulling the cart yourself?”

Anton: “With an open mindset you can go very far. If it is allowed to be abrasive and everything is allowed to be expressed, then trust will grow enormously and you will strengthen the foundation. That absolutely happened in this group, and that deserves a big compliment. From that safety, everyone discovers new sides of themselves: This is what I am good at, this is what I stand for. This creates a new culture, which is then felt and adopted throughout the entire workplace.”



The challenge

Jasper: Given the growth phase of the company, it was time to set up an MT. A new team, composed of existing, but relatively new colleagues. Most of them did not know each other well. They were also deliberately very different characters with different backgrounds. We wanted to make a serious start, more than just a walk for team spirit. The company's ambitions are obvious."

Laut: "If you grow fast, you have to build a solid foundation. Determine a shared vision and style with leadership, know each other's qualities and pitfalls, and empower everyone. We wanted to form a close-knit team. Taking that winged term 'ownership' to a higher level at all levels."

Rens: In such a new composition you have to find each other and get on the same page. There is always a natural division of roles and everyone has their ideas on how to achieve our objectives. But it is a challenge to align with that. It was important in this phase to create a style and collaboration in which everyone can express their talents.

The desire

Jasper: "We were looking for depth for optimal collaboration: mutual understanding, knowing what you can benefit from each other. Also very concrete: agreements about how we interact with each other: a Code of Conduct. Being able and allowed to share criticism without arousing resistance. Without making it personal. That's what we had in mind."

Laut: “We are very action-oriented by nature. We were looking for a method that would help us slow down for a while and then speed up even more. In addition, as DT we wanted to form a collective, with a clear vision of how we want to manage and grow the teams. Previously this was very task-oriented, not so much coaching. We wanted to include the entire organization in this.”

Rens: “Everyone has their needs and desires, and you want to coordinate these and incorporate them into agreements. In that process you gain more insight into each other’s leadership, coaching, connecting and commitment to each other. This increases cohesion and sympathy for each unique person.

The plan

Jasper: “First, in good consultation, we looked for the best combination of participants and trainers. Anne had a coaching role as a behavioral psychologist, Anton was the ‘alpha male’ in the group. We have experienced that very nice people with a broad view and an open mind. It worked great. Our needs were assessed, and a six-month program was developed, culminating in a five-day offsite in Bordeaux.

Everyone was interviewed individually, and the offsite was put together with that input. Afterwards, Rik held two joint training days and individual training sessions according to personal needs. The program was never carved in stone, there was always room for tightening and feedback. We ended the six months with a final evaluation and drinks.”

Laut: “To forge a team, we first had to carry out a baseline measurement: a personality and culture analysis. On an individual level, later collectively. We talked about manners, even determined a code of conduct. These are things that we had not consciously considered before.”

Rens: “We started with a talent test and development interview with Anne. That provided a lot of self-insight and clarity about underlying needs and limitations regarding utilizing your potential. This has helped me a lot.

Anton: “We put together a program, but adapt it where necessary. We switch in the moment, because that is when the most profit can be achieved. A lot happens during an offsite, including spontaneously. It is experiential learning, so you want to respond to that. For this group, the learning curve was so steep that we brought forward the ‘colour blind’ exercise, for example. You have to complete a puzzle as a group while blindfolded. You need everyone’s qualities for this, not taking action straight away. That’s quite complex, but they did it exceptionally well. The time was ripe for it. The effectiveness that emerged there is now an example in the workplace.”



The route

Jasper: “I still remember well that at the end of our trip to Bordeaux we went to a terrace with the team, unaccompanied. There we discussed some work matters and I noticed that we spontaneously started applying the theory. It was a very good consultation, in which everyone felt heard. For me, that meant less ‘bleating’ and letting everyone have their say.”

Because confidentiality is first evoked and practiced, a safe atmosphere is created in which everything is allowed to happen. Getting your ass kicked is a plus. This is how I was confronted harshly with my coercive management style. That may have been appropriate for an earlier phase, but not anymore. Very educational, and never personal. The key word for me is self-insight. You really get to know each other and understand where behavior comes from. You all get your turn, but we also had a lot of fun.

Anton called it love for each other. Not a term we are used to as colleagues, but okay, we like each other very much. If you write down in an exercise what you find special about the other person, and you receive all the responses, you float for a moment. Afterwards it felt like we had experienced a beautiful wedding together.”

Laut: “It was a unique experience to spend three days intensively together, disconnected from the hustle and bustle. Also confrontational indeed, we have achieved successes and cried together. You get to know each other’s backgrounds, which can greatly explain behavior in the workplace. You come together as a team with exercises, training, and also simply by exercising together, through yoga and an ice bath (!).



After the offsite we attended skills training and follow-ups with Anton and Anne. They continued to challenge us, also with a business assignment. That went surprisingly well. There is much more trust in each other, more consultation and harmony. This is evident from the way we approach projects, such as our new Executive Search branch. The powerful thing about the current and future state method is that you can plot it in the short and long term.”

The result

Jasper: “There is more understanding, more structure. Consultations run much smoother, perhaps twice as efficiently. That gives you peace of mind, more happens in less time. As managers we are has grown, which has an impact on the employees, and therefore also on the business. We certainly want to continue on this path, with Allied Forces as a partner.”

Laut: “A new collective has emerged. We are equal to each other, give much more space, and fill it well. We are and remain a fairly ‘red’ company, but we operate thoughtfully. I dare say that we give each other more love. The management is at a higher level and is more sustainable.”

Rens: “In my opinion, the goals for the program have been achieved. We give each other the space we desire and show understanding. I also dare to say that everyone has grown personally due to the new insights.”

Anton: “First the focus was on behavior, later on results. In the business they have to prove it. That is why the skills training was very practice-oriented. In return sessions we mentioned the pitfalls, such as ‘running fast’ again and showing old behavior. That’s the hardest part of any change. But, that is also where you will find the biggest profit!”