

# HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup>

Training Emotions, Enhancing Awareness

## Presentation

HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup> is a method for coaching people. The program is the result of more than ten years' experience with life coaching and leadership training where interaction between man and horse is the catalytic factor to give people new insight and awareness.

FMGroup has developed this new method where professional coaching and interaction with horses leads to training emotions and enhanced awareness thus empowering people to take responsibility for own development.

FMGroup is member of the European Association for Horse Assisted Education (EAHAE) and of the International Coach Federation, Norway (ICF).

The HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup> program is approved by the ICF, Lexington (USA) and gives professional coaches 18 CCEU (Continuing Coach Education Units).

## The Philosophy

The philosophical approach of HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup> hinges upon the following five pillars:

1. **Start from the Individual to strengthen the Group:** A group will work at its best if each person in a group feels comfortable and can give is best.
2. **The Potential lies within ourselves:** Our personality is the most valuable instrument, irrespective of whether we lead others or just ourselves. To recognize or own limits is the first step to try to increase our potential. Recognizing our limits also give us the peace of mind necessary to move those boundaries; it also gives us the opportunity to develop our empathy: In our days, everybody talks and very few listen – a sign that empathy is missing.
3. **Emotions are the glue that keeps people together:** Emotions are the glue that holds people together in a team and that commit people to any organization. When leaders fail to empathize with, or read the emotions of a group accurately, they create dissonance, sending needlessly upsetting messages: People feel off-balance and thus perform poorly. Emotions give words their correct meaning and right context.
4. **The Adaptive Unconscious:** Already in the second half of the 1800s scholars observed that the human perceptual system almost completely operates outside of conscious awareness. Together with William Hamilton and Thomas Laycock, the English physiologist and naturalist William B. Carpenter provided the foundations on which so called *adaptive unconscious* is based today. In 1874 Carpenter noticed that the more he studied the mechanism of thought, the clearer it became that it operates largely outside awareness. He noticed that the unconscious prejudices can be stronger than conscious thought and that they are more dangerous since they happen outside of conscious. He also noticed that emotional reactions can occur outside of conscious until attention is drawn to them: *"Our feelings towards persons and objects may undergo most important changes, without our being in the least degree aware, until we have our attention directed to our own mental state, of the alteration which has taken place in them."* (Carpenter W.B. 1875. *Principles of mental physiology*. 2nd ed. King, London. p24-8, 516-7, 519-20, 539-41).

- 5. New Synapses pave the way to new learning:** A synapse is a neural junction used for communication between neurons. Synapses allow neurons to form circuits within the central nervous system. Our brain can learn new information and create new synapses storing this information through one single experience, provided that the new experience is based on unusual body movements and occurs without stress or pain. In this case learning is at its best and will be remembered. Research made by among others M. Feldenkreis, show that awareness is stimulated through (unusual) movements. He showed that our body language is directly related to the way we feel, think and learn. A child has a vast repertoire of movements and they are soft, elastic and balanced. As we grow old, we use less and less movements, while the daily stress activates defense mechanisms, sorrow, pain and anguish, something that transfer and take root in our body language. We move less and less and the movements we choose not to do become more and more difficult to perform, thus shrinking our perception of what we can and cannot do. We believe that the HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup> experience can pave the way to new learning and new synapses.

## How this combined coaching approach works

HorsEcutive<sup>™</sup> hinges upon the value of the **Metaphor**. Metaphor leads to all our perceptions and experience. IT has a profound influence over our beliefs, lives, business, families and environment. When misunderstood, confusion and suffering reign.

All communication is metaphor and the best communicators are those who create metaphors that evoke the deepest, most accurate meaning in their audience. The meaning – it should be emphasized - is not in the metaphor or in the words themselves, but in the audience!

This reality is daily experienced by those who best understand the human condition, namely artists, novelists, dramatist and poets. Why? Because they have a genuine talent for working with metaphor and they don't give a toss about "scientific proof". They help us to "look within", to be more open.

Being open does not mean "believing everything we hear". It means "not disbelieving things" just because they contradict our current belief system. Being genuinely open and empathic is a precondition for successful communication. Empathy builds on self awareness: the more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we'll be in reading other people's emotions.

Indeed, successful communication is a two-way experience that requires the ability to listen. Nowadays we are more and more preoccupied with *saying* what we have in mind rather than *listening* to what the others have to say: All too often conversation has become a dialogue between deaf people. And yet we all know deep inside that if we want more love, we must be more loving; if we want more happiness, we must be more happy.

It is here that interaction with horses gives a great contribution to self-awareness, empathy and openness. In this interaction, horses play the same role artists do, namely generating metaphors that help us look within ourselves.

Horses are intuitive beings that can show us in an instant when we are fooling ourselves and when we are on the right track. As herd animals who are tuned in to the slightest inconsistency in their environment, they mirror back to us inconsistent behaviors we may not have been aware of - behaviors that stop us from moving forward

in life or from moving deeper into our own authentic spirit. *When clients leave a session, they leave with insights they can apply immediately to their lives.*

The interaction with horses happens without judges. Horses don't judge and have no hidden agendas. Gone is the all-human obsession of being scrutinized and evaluated, gone is the need to use the masks we humans often feel ourselves obliged to wear, to protect ourselves from being judged negatively.

In the interaction with the horse we learn to draw on the vastly unutilized potential of our genuine emotions, thus improving our ability to:

- Improvise
- Innovate
- Listen
- Inspire

This is a crucial part of the program. Communication is made of the verbal, conscious part (estimated to account for 20%) and of the non-verbal, emotional, unconscious part (accounting for 80%). We can become champions in the verbal communication, but it is the message conveyed by our non-verbal communication that is important, irrespective of how hard we try to conceal it.

In its simplicity, this approach is nothing less than revolutionary because it blows away conventional borderlines and contributes to build new bridges:

1. Conventional borderlines are blown apart because the need to communicate with a horse forces us to abandon traditional methods and find new ways.
2. New bridges can be built because the exercises of the program stimulate creativity, serendipity, flexibility and our ability to attune to others. Once these emotions are experienced in the setting of the exercise, they become permanent part of our own endowment and can be used in any interpersonal communication.

## The Structure of the HorsEcutive™ Program

The program can be offered both as a course for individuals who need personalized coaching expertise and as leadership development course. The program is normally customized to the needs of the client. By experience, it appears that the subjects most often discussed in the coaching sessions are:

- Leadership
- Body language
- Capacity to include
- Empathy
- Ability to motivate
- Ability to follow up
- Openness
- Dialog
- Setting limits
- Empathy
- Intuition
- Creativity
- Conflict resolution
- Setting borderlines
- Group dynamics

The program is articulated in a number of sessions, each normally lasting for two hours. The total number of sessions is agreed upon with the client to best fit the client's needs and expectations. Normally 5 – 6 sessions are enough to achieve very good results.

HorsEcutive™ gives good results also in the case of burned-outs and can be used complementary to other life coaching and talent development programs.

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## Fabio Manzetti

Fabio Manzetti, co-founder and CEO of FMGroup, was born in Pisa, Italy. After having completed his studies in Economics, both at the University of Pisa and at the Stockholm School of Economics, he has had several leading positions, also serving as Chief Economist for The Chase Manhattan Bank in Milan (Italy).

In 1985 Fabio moved to Oslo, Norway, where he still has his base. In 2003, Fabio started FMGroup together with his brother Alberto who lives in Germany. The FMGroup is a consulting company in the fields of:

- Internationalization of European companies.
- Coaching and mentoring in several European countries.

