

How LANXESS turned Commercial Excellence into a transformation engine.

A €7B specialty-chemicals leader rebuilt commercial capability around mindset, real work, and measured adaptive capacity — and delivered CFO-validated growth.



Roy van Griensven

Head of Commercial Excellence → Head of Business Transformation, LANXESS

"You don't build lasting capabilities in a classroom — you do it by igniting intrinsic motivation and working on real issues and opportunities."

THE CHALLENGE

Roy joined a company under real financial pressure in difficult markets, and inherited a classroom-style capability program from a top-tier strategy consulting firm — academically correct, logical, beautifully designed. He had watched the same design fail before: strong attendance, strong feedback scores, and no durable change in how teams worked or how the business performed.

The fatal flaw: it treated behavior as a downstream consequence of training, not as the primary thing to solve for. Early in his tenure, Roy recommended a new approach — and the executive team let him build it from the ground up.

Mid-8-figure

EBITDA impact, validated by the CFO, in under 18 months — across the full Commercial Excellence portfolio, with the Commercial Excellence Academy at its center.

— WHAT HE BUILT

From training program to **operating system**.

The Academy ran on two design choices. First, the order of the work. Then, the journey every cohort moved through.

— SEQUENCING IS THE SECRET

Mindset → Skillset → Toolset

Mindset first — eliminate passive resistance and build adaptive capacity.

Skills through real work — resilience is only earned in live problems with real stakes.

Tools on demand — adopted because teams asked for them, not because someone mandated them.

— THE AIRAS IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

Align

PRIORITIZE

The Regional Operating Committee prioritized the commercial capabilities that mattered most through a **red-dot voting exercise** — real prioritization, not polite consensus. No participant ever asked “why are we working on this?”

Inspire

ASSESS

Every participant started with **AQ® and GRIT™ assessments** plus films contrasting normal vs. best-in-class commercial behavior — seeing their own response patterns *before* anyone tried to teach them anything.

Reflect

CHARTER

A **2-day onsite workshop** with Dr. Stoltz keynoting in person. Participants named their obstacles, formed teams of 3-6, and built **Growth Project™ charters** they pitched science-fair style — ownership from day one.

Apply

EXECUTE

Teams ran **90-day Growth Projects™** back in the real business, **coached weekly by senior operators — not consultants** (led by Ron Denoo, ~30 years at Mitsubishi Chemical), then presented to a senior committee.

Scale

ROLL OUT

Proven projects got greenlit across regions and BUs. The convergence became undeniable when **five BUs independently arrived at ~95% of the same pipeline setup** — then asked for it company-wide.

— THE MEASURED RESULT · ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Mental toughness as **competitive advantage**.

+14.2%average AQ® lift
85% of leaders improved**+12.3%**average GRIT™ gain
100% of retakers improved**223**leaders assessed,
before and after

The group moved from the Average band into **Above Average on AQ®** — measurably more resilient and adaptable, with nearly everyone improving. The science is **Dr. Paul Stoltz's** — Harvard faculty and Master Coach to the U.S. Olympic Team.

AQ® and GRIT™ are scientifically validated predictors of the outcomes that move a commercial organization:

✓ **Success**
Goal attainment & advancement

✓ **Sales Performance**
Quota & revenue results

✓ **Productivity**
Output under pressure

✓ **Optimism**
Resilience & recovery

✓ **Health**
Wellbeing & lower burnout

✓ **Engagement**
Commitment & retention

— THE SIGNAL THAT IT WAS WORKING · PULL, NOT PUSH

The ComEx Academy is my happy place.

The best development experience of my career.

German HQ was the hardest test — a skeptical culture that had seen every “transformation program” before. The people who usually opt out leaned in. And a board member in **APAC asked, unprompted, “When is the Academy coming to APAC?”** before it had ever been pitched there. The demand traveled on its own — and converted: **cohort 7, the first in APAC, is now signed.**

WHAT IT PRODUCED AT SCALE

Real work. Real opportunities. **Real growth.**

6cohorts delivered globally —
Americas & Europe**~300**frontline commercial
leaders through the program**52**Growth Projects™ on real
commercial opportunities

Growth Projects™ were not classroom assignments — each was a real opportunity or execution barrier a team chose to own. Five that carried direct growth impact:

- **New Regional Market Entry** — opens a new geography for a high-demand material across energy, semiconductor, and EV supply chains. Pure top-line capture.
- **Cross-BU Innovation, Unmet Western Supply** — two BUs Western-source a material with real demand and no current Western supplier. A rare clean capture.
- **Cross-BU Entry into a High-Growth Vertical** — supplier and co-innovation partner where NATO and European defense spending drive multi-year demand.
- **Cross-BU Go-to-Market** — one BU's Personal Care reach unlocks a **\$50-100M** segment for another BU's differentiated product.
- **Accelerate SKU, Customer & SDS Setup** — clears an internal blocker that held quotes in queues, shortening RFP-to-offer time on every deal.

BUILT TO LAST

A **coach-the-coach** model was embedded so LANXESS can run future cohorts without outside support, and a **Copilot AI coaching tool** was built to support Growth Project™ teams 24/7.

WHAT'S NEXT · COHORT 7, APAC

Now signed: the first APAC cohort launches to support **10+ new Growth Projects™** aimed at top-line revenue capture and new-market development.

This is the system behind **TransformationOS™**.

The same mindset-first sequence, AIRAS journey, adaptive-capacity science, and operator coaching — built for Commercial Excellence leaders who need to accelerate transformation and prove measurable impact.