

Creating a Successful Global Business

Background

Our client was operating in 52 countries across the world, and the business had previously been run along Regional lines. The Regional business units had been dismantled and a new Global Leadership Team established with the task of capturing global synergies, standardising operations, and taking the business to a new level of profitability.

Our role

Our role was to work alongside the Global CEO and her Leadership Team to help them chart the transformation journey ahead and build their skills in getting their arms around such a high scope, distributed, change process, in which winning local battles was as important as global standardisation. Our work with this client included:

- Working with the Leadership Team to help open their minds into the different change approaches available, and then decide on which ones would be most appropriate for them, given the context and business ambition
- Having selected the appropriate change approach, selecting and helping to design some critical organisational interventions that got the global organisation aligned and working together as one behind the new ambition
- These included
 - Creating a compelling story and set of images for the change that provided a consistent call to arms across the business
 - Designing and coaching the leadership team to facilitate a series of large scale engagement events in which the top leaders of the business got together to jointly take responsibility for business improvement, identify blocks to change and how to overcome them, and create a global winning spirit
 - A process through which local business teams could build improved execution skills in their organisations
- Working with the Global Leadership Team over a two year period to build their individual and collective ability to lead change, and create openness within the team to give each other feedback to raise their game. This included ongoing coaching of the Global CEO and conducting Climate Surveys within the team that gave the CEO feedback on how she could improve her ability to create the right atmosphere within the team

Outcomes

Outcomes from this assignment are convincing. The business's profit has risen from around \$200m three years ago to nearly \$500m in 2008. Standard Customer Value Propositions now operate across the 52 countries and the sales force is making significant wins in the target customer segments. Major restructuring and operational efficiencies have been achieved whilst motivation and confidence have been enhanced, with the organisation feeling like a 'winning place' to work. There is also a strong sense of a global organisation that is joined up and coherent, an important strength in facing the economic crisis.

CEO reflections and learnings

At the beginning, I think almost all of us on the leadership team would instinctively have wanted a lot of control over the change programme. But the biggest breakthroughs were all made when we let go of that and moved into uncharted territory.

I think the most important learning has been about the power of role-modelling the sort of behaviours and leadership you want in everything you do - the importance of how you do things as well as what you do.

Because of the way Transcend helped us to design our interventions we have got real connection through the organisation.

Something that came out of that - which resonates with me every day - was the plea from more junior staff attending an engagement for "authentic leadership not management speak". Something to try to live up to every day!