

A global player in high performance plastics (HQ Switzerland)

Cross-Cultural Leadership

HIGHLIGHTS

OBJECTIVES

Increase cross-cultural executive alignment and teamwork; define the strategy and operational focus in answer to the economic crisis, improve cross-country collaboration.

ACTIVITIES

- Analysis of current situation (Leadership Team and Cultural Awareness Assessment)
- Executive Alignment Program with the European & North American Leadership Teams
- Setting up a strategy execution plan for the coming 12 months
- Redefining the operating mode of the executive teams
- Supporting the leadership team with the execution (sounding board/coaching).

RESULTS

- Mutual trust and openness within the team
- Increased cross-cultural awareness
- Understanding cross-cultural differences and local concerns
- Alignment and focus on how to improve a collective strategy execution approach
- Team alignment around its Operating Principles
- Clear communication from the top about priorities and direction
- Executive team stimulating cross-country collaboration

MORE INFORMATION

HRS Business Transformation Services • Global Consultancy • Brussels (B) • Managing Partner: Aad Boot • aad.boot@gmail.com • Partner: Hanneke Siebelink • hanneke.siebelink@gmail.com • Website: www.leadershipwatch-aadboot.com •

The client is a market leader with a strong track record. It became a global player based on organic growth and with a series of small and larger acquisitions worldwide. Over the years it had grown into a big network of local companies with different backgrounds and different (national and corporate) cultures. Increased globalization and emerging markets created a challenge for the organization, and this was intensified by the financial crisis. The senior leadership needed to come up with an answer to the decreasing revenues and profits. The board noticed that the performance of the regional executive teams deteriorated. The pressure on the team made differences in national and corporate cultures more apparent than before, and these differences started to cause internal conflicts that hindered the business.

HRS was contacted by the board to help the regional Executive teams (European team and North American team - each with multiple nationalities around the table) to improve team effectiveness and to come up with a clear strategic plan to guide the business through these difficult times.

After a Team and Cultural Awareness Assessment we came to the conclusion that in order to be able to create sustained improvement in team performance and collaboration we had to address the following obstacles:

- Lack of mutual understanding of cultural differences and how it impacts the team's effectiveness
- Lack of mutual trust
- Different perceptions about the desired priorities and decision-making process
- Cultural differences in dealing with openness, planning, and strategy execution.

By addressing these obstacles the teams became able to set up a strategy execution plan that would help the organization to get a clear focus on the way forward.

HRS designed a Cross-Cultural Team Effectiveness Program consisting of team sessions, supplemented with individual executive coaching. The program was not a theoretical exercise, but focused on the daily reality of the teams and the team members. It offered the teams specific tips, skills, tools and techniques to recognize and deal with these cultural differences effectively. All this was directly translated into the daily operating mode of the teams. The program increased cross-cultural awareness and mutual understanding. This helped the teams to become much more effective in defining strategic focus, and setting up a clear strategy road map, including consistent communication to the organization. Collaboration across departments and countries was now actively stimulated by the top, and improved significantly.



What participants said about working with us

Client Feedback

"I feel we actually made a decision here to be a team and act as one. Despite our cultural differences. As a deliberate choice."

"The workshops were confronting but very powerful. We were challenged in our behavior and professionally guided to discuss sensitive subjects in a constructive way. It made us grow as a team and individually."

"The HRS support and methodology was very effective. By working with HRS I now understand what alignment really means and how it drives our business success."