

# Implementation of Scandinavian management style in a globalised company

## CHALLENGE

The case company is a technology-heavy company focusing on development and sale of analytical solutions, in particular to the agricultural industry and food manufacturers. The company has approx. 1100 employees worldwide, and the analytical instruments are sold through 21 subsidiaries and more than 100 retailers. The company is a market leader on a large part of its markets.

The general challenge for the company consisted in making highly product-oriented local managers think in a more customer- and sales-oriented manner. At the same time, the challenge was complex as the company operates at many continents and, thus, deals with many widely different cultures. The purpose of the project was to bring the local sales managers to a common minimum level and ensure a common frame of reference globally in the company across persons, countries and cultures in order to achieve better sales results in the long term.

## DIAGNOSIS

Implement Consulting Group and the case company faced the challenge of developing a uniform sales-oriented management style in the local sales companies, based on a Scandinavian approach according to which sustainable and value-creating results are achieved through involvement of the employees, competence

### Central problems

- How do we create a uniform sales-oriented management style in companies where the bearing platform is not directly visible, and where it is believed that the current behaviour has delivered satisfactory sales results?
- How do we create behavioural change of the managers which can be reflected in the sales activities and results?
- How do we create a synchronised behavioural change in all subsidiaries at all four continents at the same time?
- How do we create a framework for dialogue in the management group in all the companies?

development of all employees and delegation of responsibilities.

This approach was to be implemented in the largest 13 subsidiaries which implied a number of challenges, e.g. to create a change process involving autonomously managed sales companies from four continents and successful frames for dialogue in the management groups of the companies.

## SOLUTION

In accordance with the philosophy that you learn best through play and own experience, an implementation game was developed based on the principles of the "Trivial Pursuit" game. In the implementation game, the subsidiaries internally competed for implementing well-defined development measures, and training had been carried out locally in advance.

The development measures were divided into six categories corresponding to the "wedges" in the Trivial Pursuit game and were defined by a working group with parti-

cipation of representatives from the local sales companies. The local management teams were trained in "hands on" management tools which could promote the implementation of the current development measures of the management team. On the basis of the training sessions, four to five sub-assignments were subsequently defined for each category and were to be carried out by the management team in order for the development measure to be considered as implemented. Only when this had taken place would the management team acquire the corresponding wedge - i.e. only a real implementation made it possible to win the game.

## RESULT

The project has brought about a number of results, e.g.:

- Focus on working motivation at the employee meetings has strengthened and developed the employees in all sales companies
- Individual competence development plans for all of the 500

# Implementation of a new business model

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employees in all sales companies have been prepared and initiated

- Customer categorisation completed, account plans prepared and execution initiated
- Sales tools developed and locally adapted to the individual sales companies
- Business plans operationalised and strengthened significantly in the sales companies
- Revised performance management systems implemented in the sales companies

The choice of the Trivial Pursuit game as the basic idea was not a coincidence. The game concept is known worldwide and, thus, only requires little further explanation. At the same time, the recognisability made it easy to relate to the project.

It enhanced communication significantly throughout the project, and in large change projects, the importance of communication as a catalyst for behavioural change cannot be stressed enough.

Moreover, the group executive experienced a significant improvement in relation to the strategic planning of 2005, since there was a considerably better match between the strategic plans at group level and the local plans.

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