

An aerial photograph of a river flowing through a rugged, rocky landscape. Several kayakers are visible on the river, some in white kayaks and others in darker ones. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the surrounding terrain is dark and rocky. The overall mood is adventurous and challenging.

Culture Change Case Study

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‘This programme has supported my development as a leader by giving me excellent insight into my development areas. The meta questioning and coaching techniques were very useful. I will be able to use my values as a standard against which to myself and my team accountable.’

— Programme Participant

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The Client

A business process Optimisation Company with a global footprint and staff numbering approximately 60,000.

What was the client request?

The client contracted TOWARD to design a Leadership Development Programme for its Senior Leadership population. The client was experiencing some challenges in articulating the culture of the organisation following a significant acquisition.

The company had rapidly grown from around 20,000 employees to upwards of 60,000. What followed was a period of tension, conflict and diminished performance, resulting from the two company's different ways of operating. One was coming from an open, flat and entrepreneurial structure, while the other was traditionally more hierarchical and process driven.

It was felt by the Senior Leadership Team that a focus must be given to draw on the best of both companies, and establish a new culture and set of leadership behaviours.

Approach

A blended learning approach, which included knowledge-based experiential leadership development sessions, the creation of innovative online resources (including podcasts and instructional videos) and publication of individual workbooks with supporting exercises. We delivered face-to-face sessions in the USA (California and Arizona), the Philippines (Manila), India (Delhi) and Europe (Northern Ireland). Additionally, the TOWARD team of 10 consultants supported the top level of leadership in their learning and development through 1:1 and group coaching sessions, conducted via audio and Skype.

Audience

Executive team (10 individuals), executive level minus one leadership (123 individuals), and executive level minus two leadership (692 individuals).

237

USA & Canada



210

India & UAE



127

Philippines & Malaysia



72

UK & Europe



41

South & Central America



26

China & Hong Kong



22

Japan & Korea



21

Australia & New Zealand



What was the agreed solution?

Drawing on concepts from organisational development and psychology, TOWARD designed a bespoke leadership development programme for the top 850 leaders that would facilitate them to reflect on their own personal values and alignment with the organisational culture, and equip them with the leadership skills to embed the culture and behaviours throughout the organisation. The program was delivered over a 12-month period. Different approaches were used for the three different leadership populations, summarised as follows:

Senior Leadership Team

- A thorough diagnosis stage, consisting of psychometric profiling and semi-structured interviews
- An initial 2.5-day off-site
- 2x2 hour 1:1 coaching sessions
- A further 1.5-day off-site
- Supporting written journals and podcasts

Executive Minus One Leadership population

- Psychometric profiling
- 1-day World Café style event which included Culture Launch and Business update
- 2-day residential leadership development session
- Supporting written journals and podcasts
- 1x2 hour 1:1 remote coaching session
- 1x3 hour remote group coaching session

Executive Minus Two Leadership population

- 1-day World Café style event which included Culture Launch and Business update
- 12 week remote learning programme, supported by podcasts, instructional videos and written journal (curriculum mirrored that experienced by minus one population)
- Internal learning communities for support and sharing of best practice

Results

The aims of the programme were:

- To equip leaders to demonstrate a common understanding of the organisational culture and associated leadership behaviours in various business and geographical contexts.
- To enable leaders to discover how their own personal values are aligned with the organisational culture and leadership behaviours (by introducing leaders to concepts and theories from the worlds of psychology and organisational development).
- To equip leaders with awareness and tools for self-coaching, and applying leadership behaviours in their day-to-day work.
- To generate buy-in and commitment from top-level leadership to role model the desired culture and leadership behaviours.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the programme has contributed significantly to the wider organisational awareness of the culture and leadership behaviours. Evidence gathered from interviews and self-report measures suggest that positive behavioural change and cultural shift is occurring within the organisation.

9 Cultural Statements

We facilitated the Senior Leadership Team to agree on 9 cultural statements that would articulate the organisational culture. Following our work they launched a Culture Branding Campaign in 2015. The cultural statements are used in marketing collateral (including promotional material and recruitment drives), onboarding programmes and performance reviews. The statements are used globally.

10,000+ Stories

One of the most striking outcomes of the programme was the creation of a ‘story bank’. This was completely driven by staff as a way to share real life examples of employees living out the organisational culture and values. By using story as a tool for creating change, the organisation is breaking down language and cultural barriers to clearly articulate what is important to the organisation and what it stands for.

Metrics

25%

of hires join through
Referral Programme

80%

Strong participation
in All-Staff
company survey

95%

Satisfaction
rate of Leadership
Programme

7%

Promotions
during 2015

Conclusion

The results from this programme confirm that this type of intervention can have a profound, observable impact on the participant's leadership capability and ability to communicate messages with clarity and authenticity.

TOWARD uses a 'coaching' methodology in all of its interactions with clients, providing appropriate levels of support and challenge to stimulate profound learning and behavioural change.

'Best part of the entire 3 days was the time spent defining my most important values. The time spent allowed me to be comfortable and authentic when rolling the vision and values out to my team will pay dividends many times over.'

— Programme Participant

'Interactions and peer coaching exercises were very helpful to make it personal for us, and also to benefit from sharing with our colleagues.'

— Programme Participant



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