Developing leadership culture: moving from a small company to a global organization.

A Case Study with Maersk Oil
Introducing...

Forum Interactive
Forum Interactive is a learning and development consultancy specializing in culture change, leadership development and health and safety. We use creative, interactive methods to inspire, engage and motivate people towards behavioural change.

The stories we devise show the relationship between business performance and the way people think, behave and communicate at work. These stories are based on evidence from industry research, incident reports and experiences from inside the client organization.

Maersk Oil
Turning marginal and challenging fields into a commercial success has been a cornerstone of Maersk Oil’s business since the company was founded in 1962.

Maersk Oil developed groundbreaking technologies while working with tight chalk reservoirs in the Danish North Sea, and enabled Denmark to become an oil and gas producing country. Later, these technologies were deployed around the globe allowing the company to become a truly global player in the upstream business.

Maersk Oil is now producing oil from the Danish and UK sections of the North Sea, Qatar, Algeria, Brazil and Kazakhstan. It conducts exploration activities in those areas as well as offshore Norway, the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, Kurdistan, Greenland and Angola.
The Case Study: Objectives

Maersk Oil has an ambitious growth target towards a dramatically increased production and an even sharper edge on the execution of major capital projects. In order to deliver this, it is necessary to create new systems, processes and ways of working that better support a global organization. In particular, the organization needs to develop a mind-set that supports an effective system of business performance management.

More effective business performance management tools have been introduced. Alongside these is a need for cultural change among regional leadership teams in which they embrace a ‘consult and facilitate’ style to improve their decision-making practice.

In order to support the cultural change, Mads Sylvest Eegholm (transformation program team member) from Maersk Oil worked with us at Forum Interactive to devise an intervention for business leadership teams across the organization globally. We designed a one day programme that would take each team through an exploratory process leading to two key outcomes:

- a code of conduct which they create together and immediately apply in their next performance management meeting;
- a greater ability to hold robust discussions leading to quality decision-making.
Method

The attitudes and behaviours underpinning a ‘consult & facilitate’ leadership style were explored through a story about the leadership team of a fictitious company. This enabled the group to reflect on its own behaviour and communication as a team and the impact this has on decision-making.

In particular, teams could explore the type and style of questioning that best supports a discussion process in which all viewpoints are considered, problems are sufficiently explored and appropriate decisions are made.

As Mads explains “The basis of our performance management meetings is the dashboard platform which provides us with tangible performance measures. At first we were unsure how to integrate Forum Interactive’s process into this system. However, our collaboration with them created a seamless integration which has improved our system by adding a whole new dimension.”

The usual format at training events involves giving instructions and taking notes. Mads noticed the impact of using a different approach. “On entering the room at the beginning of the workshop, people expected a 100+ slide power point session. When the ‘Forum Process’ was revealed, there was a sense of surprised excitement. Their engagement was immediate and lasting because the process itself remains both entertaining and interesting.”
Benefits

The highly inclusive approach we took enabled leadership teams to:

- Recognize the need for change in the way they operate
- take a 360 degree perspective of the problem
- explore options and identify their own solutions
- broaden their view of performance management to encompass the ‘softer’ human elements as well as facts and figures
- openly discuss and define what best practice means and what it should look like in terms of behaviour.

Mads: “The process used by Forum Interactive mirrors the ‘consult and facilitate’ style that we want teams to embrace. It encourages people to come up with multiple solutions to a single problem, providing opportunities to select the best route forward. This level of informed decision-making is what we want teams to achieve at performance meetings.

“This approach was also a great way to encourage people to be frank about their experience of working together. Comments could initially be made in the context of the fictitious character and organization in the story. They could then be applied to their own situation.”
Outcomes

This intervention succeeded in generating key changes to the way that leadership teams conduct performance management meetings:

- performance management meetings have become more focused
- leadership debates now involve more questioning and challenge
- people have developed a more holistic view of the business beyond their defined roles resulting in a greater involvement in discussion all round
- there is greater collaboration and team work in leadership meetings
- there is an improved quality of decision making
- there is now a robust process of recording and specifying actions which means that they can be more effectively followed up and deadlines can be met
- teams now look beyond the immediate horizon of the dashboard and are better at dealing with longer term problems.
Tess Allen (Project Lead, Forum Interactive)

“The level of energy and commitment that Mads and his colleagues invested in getting this ambitious programme right for their leadership teams was truly impressive. The ‘consult & facilitate’ style that we wanted teams to embrace was reflected throughout the consultation process as well as in the design of the programme itself. This really contributed to the impact it has had.”
Contact us

If you'd like more information then please get in contact with:

Tess Allen

++ 44 (0) 7920 207732
tess@foruminteractive.co.uk
www.foruminteractive.co.uk