

Results Focused Team Working – Three Case Studies

This document provides three case study summaries of how *Results Focused Team Working* was used to transform the performance of three organisations operating in three different sectors with different needs and aspirations.

- The transformation of a strike crippled bottling and distribution plant becoming the winner of Britain's Best Factory award and how this contributed to the organisation becoming one of the world's leading drinks companies.
- The elevation of a leading European sports venue which was the butt of jokes about the notoriously bad customer services standards it provided becoming revered as a benchmark for customer service excellence.
- How a specialist electro-mechanical capital goods manufacturer faced with the expiry of the patent on their main product increased production by 266% over a three year period to give them a competitive advantage and a secure future.

Case One - The transformation of a strike crippled bottling and distribution plant becoming the winner of Britain's Best Factory award and how this contributed to the organisation becoming one of the world's leading drinks companies

Background

After a merger between two drink manufacturers morale was low at one of the main bottling and distribution centres. Strikes were frequent, productivity was low and the threat of closure hung like a black cloud over the unit. Management had lost control and rumours were rife. Radical action was needed merely to survive.

The solution

The management team were engaged in a workshop to agree:

- A new approach for improving two way communication.
- A new strategy for raising employee engagement and getting everyone involved in addressing issues that would impact on the competitiveness and performance of the company.
- A list of critical issues that needed to be addressed to improve performance and ensure the long term viability of the unit.

Managers, team leaders and all staff were trained in team working practices and a group of internal team facilitators were trained. A key part of this was providing each employee with a Belbin Team Role profile report which was used during the training.

Over the next three years ***Results Focused Team Working*** was adopted and dedicated teams were selected to tackle each one of the critical issues.

The Outcome

After some cynicism, by management and the workforce, the new approach gradually won more and more approval. Teams started to achieve some impressive results and to show great enthusiasm as they realised they were being trusted to tackle issues which were normally the domain of management.

Those who were not convinced were gradually won over and actively sought to join one of the improvement teams and management found themselves busy in an unusual way, looking for new issues, problems and challenges to assign to teams.

Each success was celebrated and recognised by a framed certificate of achievement being prominently displayed in the reception area. Notable among the successes were:

- Bottling speed increased from 55 to 70 bottles per minute.
- Packaging stock reduced from 66 to 13 days.
- Leading brand sales increased from £600,000 to £2.1m per year.
- Management levels being reduced from 6 to 3 at a considerable cost saving.
- 20% saving on bottling glass consumption.

The list of successes just grew and grew and eventually a special room had to be created to display the framed achievement certificates. The room also contained videos and other information about the transformation that was being sought by the ever increasing number of visitors. And once the accolade of winning Britain's Best Factory award was achieved the number of visitors grew even more as people from all over the world came to learn how it had been done.

Case Two - The elevation of one of European leading sports venues which was the butt of jokes about the notoriously bad customer services standards to becoming revered as a benchmark for customer service excellence.

Background

Continual bad media coverage relating to poor levels of customer service and a survey on customer service standards putting the venue near the bottom the executive management recognised that this issue had to be addressed.

The solution

The initial brief to CERT was to design and conduct some customer service training courses but a preliminary fact finding visit revealed that this alone would not achieve the desired outcome.

The approach recommended and adopted involved acting on a number of fronts in a coherent way. This included:

- Engaging senior management in a workshop to agree changes to the way people were managed.

- Re-defining the rules and procedures provided for the use of stewards and other staff into three classifications:
 - o Red – Must be complied with at all times.
 - o Amber – Discretion given to senior stewards and managers as to when to apply
 - o Green – For guidance only and for discretionary use by all staff.
- New selection procedures to ensure people with the appropriate behavioural tendencies were appointed by using the Belbin Team role individual and job assessments.
- Providing customer service training.
- Setting up facilitated *Results Focused Team Working* workshops to engage people in identifying and implementing customer service improvement initiatives.

The Outcome

The result of the above approach was that customer service standards were improved dramatically and the venue became revered rather than ridiculed for standards of customer service.

Specifically the following outcomes were achieved:

- Customer service survey showed a 52.4% improvement over two years.
- Venue rated as number one by leading international specialist sports journal.
- Widespread acclaim given by TV, radio and press visitors for the standard of service and facilities provided.
- Increase in demand resulted in decision to undertake major venue development programme.
- Selected as venue of 2012 specialist Olympic events.

There was also a measurable drop in staff turnover as a result of people finding it a desirable place to work.

Case Three - How a specialist electro-mechanical capital goods manufacturer faced with the expiry of the patent on their main product increased production by 266% over a three year period to give them a competitive advantage and a secure future.

Background

The company had been relatively successful and enjoyed steady growth over a number of years before facing a major challenge as the patent for its main product was due to expire. It was recognised that this would result in keen competition from others who would be able to copy the technology and set up manufacturing facilities in countries with lower labour costs.

The solution

The executive management team were engaged in a series of workshops to decide how to meet the new threat facing them and decided to some set about making some radical changes. This included changing the factory layout to switch from batch production to *Results Focused* cell production teams.

Over 500 man-weeks of training was undertaken to cover Kaizen continuous improvement methods, the Belbin team working methodology, negotiating with and making presentations to clients and other skills that were identified as likely to have a direct impact on performance.

The Outcome

The company not only met the expiry of its patent challenge it achieved an average of 20% per annum growth in sales in each year since the initiative was taken. Specifically, following major improvements were made:

- 266% increase in production over three years.
- Production time slashed from 22 to 5 hours per unit.
- Manufacturing savings of £100 per machine for labour costs.
- Material costs per machine reduced by £500.
- Although wages increased by 10% costs per unit declined.

After some initial cynicism the new way of working was passionately embraced by the workforce who demonstrated a strong sense of purpose and pride with each person becoming an enthusiastic ambassador for the company. And, instead of export business declining it grew to over 90% of sales.

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