

Cases: coaching and consultation for transformational processes

Making the most of synergies in the context of a merger of firm A and firm B, aligning common objectives, strategies, and visions, and establishing an appropriate corporate culture.

Summary:

Addressing cultural and personality-related differences within the management team made it possible to successfully define and implement common objectives based on shared values as well as a common concept of mankind.

Initial situation:

So far, have had companies A and B have had different strategies and corporate cultures.

A is a technically oriented distributor with highly qualitative solutions. The products are sold at rather high prices and deliver a high margin. B is a leading supplier. The products are cost sensitive

There are three main challenges to master in the merger that lies ahead:

1. A and B will remain separate brands. However, the team will be managed internally as one unit with a common vision as well as common objectives and processes.
2. The group, previously a decentralized holding, will change to a centrally managed corporation within in a matrix structure.
3. A and B are expected to adopt a common corporate culture in alignment with the group.

The objectives in the context of transformation:

- Performance assessment and role clarification within the management team (MT), attaining a shared understanding of leadership and consolidation of leadership skills.
- Optimization of teamwork even between differing functions, open and trustful communication as well as a culture of shared decision-making, which is rigorously followed
- The MT should successfully implement the objectives of the transformation and credibly establish and live by a consistent corporate culture in accordance with the values of the group, thus acting as role models.

Process:

- Analysis: interviews with all members of the MT to understand the individual assessments of the overall situation, identify possible solutions and success factors for a successful integration, clarify expectations and further clarify objectives. Concept developed informed by obtained insights and used as blueprint for next steps in alignment with client.

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for Results

- **Implementation:** execution of several workshops with the management team every few months to work specifically on objectives. A mutual understanding – and thus easier handling – of the different positions, cultures and personalities was paramount, as was the clarification of roles and responsibilities, communication and information flow, and a common decision-making process. Communication with the employees was systematic and ongoing and first successes were regularly announced. To establish a mutual understanding of leadership and live by a common corporate culture while also establishing it within the company, it was essential to determine the connecting factors, e.g., shared values and common concept of mankind. Continuous monitoring of the step-by-step measures with clear prioritization was essential for a successful implementation.

Next to the workshops, the management team received three-hour-long individual coaching sessions each month. Hogan Assessments were conducted during the individual coaching sessions to analyze how individual strengths and weaknesses aligned with the desired values culture. We then worked on this alignment in a more focused way.

Results after 1 year:

- A grown relationship of trust and open communication led to faster decisions that were supported and implemented by all despite initial differences in opinion.
- A clear commitment of all as to the future corporate culture, shared values, jointly developed understanding of leadership and strategic objectives.
- The staff fed back to the management team that they had perceived a positive change within management and felt fully informed thanks to the continuous communication. The regular and progressive successes had strengthened employee confidence.

Individual feedback from the management team: "We have much more confidence in each other, enabling us to make decisions faster instead of endlessly discussing. Now, we are working as a team and it's so rewarding. I would have never thought that we could all surpass ourselves so much with coaching. Without the external support, we would not have been able to succeed so easily in such a short time."

Further reasons for transformation process coaching and consultation:

- Mergers and acquisitions, carve-outs
- Significant cost reduction programs, digital transformation
- Corporate restructuring or significant structural changes, e.g., through rapid growth

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