

Case Study: The Rapid Evolution towards Innovation and Performance Excellence

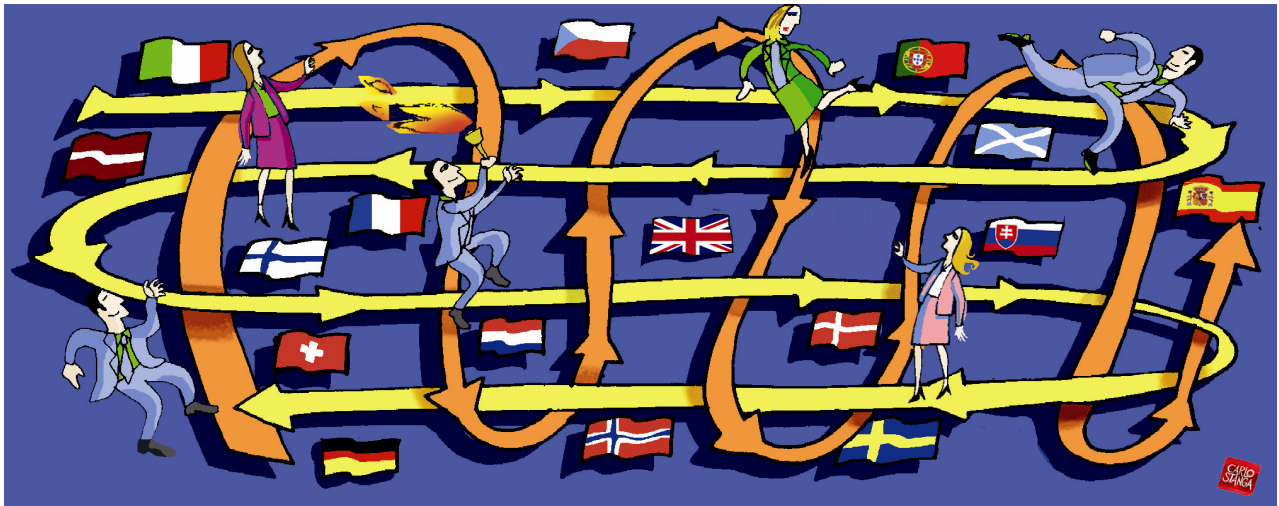


Fig. 1. Engineering organizational integration.

Situation

Intrum Justitia is Europe's leading Credit Management Services (CMS) group. Founded in Sweden in 1923, it expanded through numerous acquisitions during the 1970s. In 2002, the company was listed in the Stockholm stock exchange and by 2005, it was a federation of companies operating in 24 countries across Europe.

The momentum of Intrum Justitia's successful expansion generated centrifugal forces that threatened the organization's very cohesiveness. To counter this effect, it became an imperative to create a gravitational field to bring the international satellites into corporate orbit.

Our mandate was threefold: increase organizational integration, develop leadership capability across the continent, and gain higher employee engagement and commitment to better achieve the business strategy.

Program

We designed, developed, and deployed a demanding corporate induction and leadership development program for the Company's management.

Participants for each session represented a cross section of the organization, functionally and transnationally. The intensive week-long curriculum encompassed classroom instruction, interactive workshops, business practicums, as well as team building activities, social entertainment and recreational downtime. Subsequently, individual coaching was offered to select people in key roles.

The summit of these meetings was denoted by the activities of the final 24-hours. At each, groups formed extemporaneously to identify, develop and present to the CEO a special project that the participants were exceptionally committed to, which could be 'started on Monday' and completed within a maximum period of six months.

The CEO listened attentively and provided each group with earnest feedback. The CEO then presented

the Company, business, and provided industry 'secrets' of financial success that create customer, shareholder, and investors value to conclude the management team's education.

Impact

The curriculum content, combined with an agenda that deliberately increased 'heat and pressure' to accelerate collective bonding proved highly effective:

- In discovering shared attitudes, beliefs, practices, and values participants saw the foundations of a new corporate culture emerging;
- In becoming cognizant of their values, participants developed personal leadership and a sense of purpose about their work;
- In gaining a deeper understanding of Intrum's corporate values and their own, participants aligned the two which enabled them to become more productive, both personally and organizationally;
- In reducing friction and drag caused by employee misalignment, the velocity and power of Intrum's organizational direction received a strong boost. This effect was further amplified by Michael Wolf's outstanding leadership and vision, the current CEO appointed in 3QTR06.

During the course of the program, the ongoing process of exchanging presentations began to weave a stronger corporate fabric (Fig. 1). Vertical integration increased thanks to the bottom-top and top-bottom presentations. Meanwhile, the experience of joining forces to present to the Company's CEO united employees horizontally across functions and nations.

Finally, the post-program projects have continued to promote international communication and cooperation as well as consolidate company interpersonal relationships, while producing a wide range of valuable business outcomes that have enhanced performance excellence and innovation.