

The new changes at Valbrew threw up new opportunities and Ehis got a new and very demanding role as a Trade Marketing Manager, responsible for coordinating all the Trade Marketing Activities for the Company across the country. This was not just a big change for Ehis, but it was a big change for everyone.

The Company had never used trade marketing before - it had focused only on pushing products to its distributors - now Ehis was going to be coordinating the effort to get Sales Managers and Reps to start working closely with these distributors, wholesalers and retailers to create awareness about their various products and create excitement about Valbrew at the points of sale.

The first few months were difficult for Ehis - he had to learn a lot about Trade Marketing, attend lots of meetings and seminars and start customizing a lot of the material from SoftCee which was mostly focused on the soft drinks segment in Chile. After a while, he started to think of his new role as a punishment for being too vocal at those sessions with the pony-tailed chap from Chile. After that lunch-time revelation, he stopped saying YES and started asking plenty questions. His plenty questions no doubt put him in this problem o! - he thought to himself.

Ehis' biggest challenge however was getting the Sales Managers and Reps who didn't report to him to start implementing all the changes as far as Trade Marketing is concerned, and from the early feelers - this was MISSION IMPOSSIBLE! "How can they expect us to be doing all this extra work, when they have laid off more than half of our sales force" was the typical response when he visited the regions to kick-start the trade marketing project.

The acquisition had some human casualties especially in the Commercial Division - the Chileans believed in a lean and strong model and wanted to drive sales incentives up rather than have a higher fixed cost of salaries. It was all about creating a bigger upside for the business and the sales team, and trade marketing was the innovative way to make this happen.

On a trip to Lokoja which had been one of Valbrew's biggest markets, Ehis logged on to the SoftCee Academy on-line platform. The guy with the pony-tail, his name was Eduardo, had bragged about the repertoire of learning resources on a wide variety of subjects on the Company's Learning Management System (LMS). With a lot of time on his hand driving from



Abuja, Ehis decided to check out what the LMS had to offer. The journey was made even longer with the bad roads and the high number of police checkpoints and he needed something to keep his mind off the fear of kidnappers and robbers who had become quite a regular feature on the nation's highways recently.

Ehis enjoyed the content on Change Management and the use of the ADKAR Model to manage change. The teaching was simple - If you want people to embrace your innovation projects in an organization, then manage the people side of the project by building **A**wareness, fueling **D**esire, providing **K**nowledge and **A**bility and creating **R**einforcement.

As he watched the videos, he learned about John Kotter's "8 Reasons Why Change Efforts fail", and he could easily tick off on each reason and relate them to the things that had been going on at Valbrew. "Lokoja is going to be different" he said to himself as he started outlining his new approach using a Change Management Plan based on ADKAR and Kotter's 8.

And so, it was - it wasn't magically different, but it was the beginning of better days to come. In the weeks and months ahead, Ehis refined his Change Management Plan and got the buy-in of the Sales Director into a larger-scale implementation. The extra time and attention invested in engaging the Sales Reps paid off significantly, and Eduardo and the team in Concepcion, were very impressed with the up-take of Trade Marketing in Nigeria - much better than in most new acquisitions that they had done in recent times. One thing Ehis changed at his Strategy Sessions and Sales Engagement Meetings was that he never asked: "DO YOU UNDERSTAND", instead he used a more ADKAR-appropriate question: "WHAT DO YOU THINK"

So, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are you facing similar challenges with getting some of your innovation projects to work?

Will you like to create the Change DNA in your organization and improve people's willingness to participate in these initiatives?

Well, reach out to our Organizational Development Team at Learning Impact NG on +234 818 195 6161 and we will work with you to achieve all of these and much more.

