



MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS

Hilal Drives a Cultural Transformation

The sales training for the Sales Managers at KG Industries was an amazing experience for all the participants, and the fact that the Commercial Director, Hilal was there to participate in the program made it even more impactful. Consultative selling was a new and different way of selling and the facilitator, Dr Shido was so conversant with the manufacturing and conglomerate sector that one would have thought she had worked there all her life.

The workshops also brought out a few issues that kept Hilal thinking deeply all through his ride back home that Saturday after the four-day long program. One thing was clear, there was a big generational gap - it was almost like a Tsunami took place that just got rid of one generation of the workforce at KG Industries. So, they had a handful of very experienced sales professionals on one hand, and then a large number of green horns, with barely five years' experience in the Company on the other. Clearly, there was need for mentorship and more training, but it looked like the greatest casualty over the years has been the Company's CULTURE.

Many of the younger managers and professionals understood very little about the "KG Industries" way, and at the risk of always sounding old-fashioned Hilal had to intervene several times to set them straight on many areas of the organization's culture - why they needed to answer their phones after two rings; how important their presentations were; and the philosophy behind their first-name policy. There were so many things that the greater population of staff members didn't understand, and it was clear that KG Industries was no longer the one-culture organization that it prided itself to be decades ago when Hilal came in as a Management Trainee.

"Certainly, these cultural gaps have had an effect on our results as a Company", Hilal noted as he chatted with the Company's CEO (Rajiv) and the Director of Human Resources (Marilyn). Rajiv had also been in KG for many years - he was a second generation Indian - Nigerian and had risen through the ranks on the Production side of the business and had seen the "good, bad and ugly" of KG Industries. Marilyn on the other hand represented the newer generation of professionals at KG and had been here for about 4 years after a decade long career in one of the large breweries in Nigeria.



“It is settled”, said Rajiv “Hilal, you will be responsible for driving this Cultural renewal Program. I know it should be a Marilyn and HR affair, but I think that you are the biggest stakeholder in this matter and you are besides myself, the real custodian of what is good and rich of the KG Industries way. Marilyn you will learn from Hilal - anyway in a few months you know he will be stepping into my role, so this will be a great project for our in-coming CEO, a good legacy for me to bequeath and an amazing learning experience for Marilyn. It is a win-win for everyone!”

Hilal got down to work and Marilyn provided a lot of context and frameworks to guide him in shaping this process. They also needed an external consultant who came with a lot of insights on managing cultural change. The next few months were really exciting. A Transformation Team consisting of managers from the High-Potential (HIPO) talent pool of the Company. The Talent Management drive that Marilyn had implemented a year prior was very successful and this project was a great way to “sweat” the talent, as she had always proposed.

The first thing that the Transformation Team did was to create a lot of communication and engagement around the Company’s four values - Teamwork, Influence, Creativity and Knowledge (TICK). A number of workshops were held to create awareness about what these values meant. Each workshop broke down the values into specific descriptors, and the outcomes were used by the external Consultant, Mr Abiodun to create Board Games, scenarios, role plays, short video skits and cross-word puzzles that were going to be valuable collateral to be used throughout the process, especially in training sessions.

To fuel desire in the cultural transformation, Hilal and his team implemented a number of surveys - internal and external. The feedback from the customers was amazing as they provided real context of the type of behaviours they expected from the “typical” sales reps from KG. The data from the internal and external surveys ended up in beautiful infographics and slides that were sent to all staff. The point was to show the gap that existed between the current attitudes and behaviours of staff and the ideal culture that was expected.

The angle from customers was profound in showing how the right culture would create the right results eventually. Hilal’s choice of involving customers was *right on the money*, because the Company’s major distributors and their staff who participated in the process felt really special about being invited to give their feedback - further strengthening their relationships and increasing the “share of mind and wallet” that Dr Shido had harped on during the Consultative Selling Workshop.



The stage was now set for company-wide training programs, road shows and sensitization on the desired culture, and the collateral (games, badges, puzzles, etc.) that had been put together made the workshops fun and interesting. The transformation team had gained lots of ground as the results of the monthly employee pulse-checks showed that cultural alignment was increasingly steady and so too was employee engagement.

The more conversations that came up about culture and the KG Industries way, the more employees felt important. The sessions created lots of ideas for Rajiv and the rest of the EXCO to transform various areas of the Company, it was like the TICK values had finally come alive - just the way it was many years ago when Hilal and Rajiv were Management Trainees.

The final piece of the puzzle was incorporating all of these into the Company's performance management system. Marilyn had a great idea to create a 360-degree leadership appraisal and tie it to career advancement and managers' bonuses. It was an idea she mooted in her first few months at KG Industries that was turned down, but this transformation project was just the right platform that she needed.

She got the EXCO nod and at the end of the first year rolled out the 360-degree program. In addition, a number of HR Metrics to measure the success of the HR Transformation project were developed and incorporated into the performance Contracts of EXCO Members and the CEO - this made sure all hands were on deck.

KG Industries was back - with higher levels of Teamwork, Influence, Creativity and Knowledge, the clock was "ticking" away on its competitors, as the more aligned and focused KG Team delivered better results out there. Distributors got better treatment and felt like part of the family; while product development and production were more adaptive, creative and efficient.

Like Rajiv had predicted it was a win-win for all, and one-year into implementation. Hilal, the new CEO took over a much healthier company; Rajiv took a bow when the ovation was loudest; Marilyn got some more stripes on her shoulders; and of course - KG Industries was bigger and better!

Cultural Transformation Projects are a must-have for all organizations, but without the right tools and approaches, many organizations fail to implement them or fail at implementing them. At Learning Impact NG, we can work with you to design and implement a successful Cultural Transformation Program. Just call us on +234 818 195 6161 to explore how can we support you in this regard.

