

Pro Melior
change for better

EXECUTIVE TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CASE STUDY



CASE STUDY: EXECUTIVE TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SITUATION

The Middle-Eastern unit of global energy company was facing a challenging period due to a slump in the business cycle combined with frictions in its Leadership Team. As the Middle East business had grown, the Leadership Team had expanded to reflect the broader set of service lines and increased levels of functional support. Most of the new members had joined from outside the company. They were not accustomed to the company's culture or ways of doing things. Furthermore, they were scattered across numerous countries in the region. ProMelior was asked to uncover why the Leadership Team was not living up to its full potential and to drive a program of individual and team coaching to improve business performance.

DIAGNOSIS

To gain a robust picture of the leadership team, both as individuals and as a team, ProMelior conducted a thorough set of diagnostic analyses. For each executive, we conducted 360-degree feedback surveys and administered various psychometric tests. We also conducted in-depth 'Life-line interviews' in which we explored how the individuals had made important decisions in their lives. By triangulating the various sources of information, we built up a detailed picture of 'what made each executive tick' and their observed behavior patterns in business situations. We also observed the Leadership Team in action during a variety of meetings to understand how they discussed issues, managed conflict and made decisions.

Through the diagnostic analyses, ProMelior generated several important insights. First, the psychometric testing and Lifeline interviews clearly showed that most of the Leadership Team members were 'amiable' vs 'analytical' people. In other words, they valued being liked and maintaining harmony over analyzing issues and pursuing the 'truth'. As a result, the Leadership Team rarely analyzed the company's strategic challenges and tended to avoid open conflicts between team members. Over the long-term, however, these behaviors led to a growing set of unresolved issues which elevated interpersonal tensions and created operational gridlock. Second, the Leadership Team held very unstructured meetings without clear agendas or robust time management. Not surprisingly, the meetings tended to meander on detailed operational issues without addressing the key strategic or organizational challenges of the company.

SOLUTION

ProMelior began the change process by presenting the insights from the diagnostic analyses. There were many 'Ah-Ha' moments as the Leadership Team began to understand the root causes of their individual and collective challenges. For many in the group it was very motivating to learn that seemingly big problems stemmed from small issues. The energy level quickly grew as the group felt that they were more than capable of addressing their challenges.

At this stage, ProMelior began to equip the Leadership Team with a toolkit that would help them move forward. We held several training sessions on the characteristics of a high-

performing team and helped the client agree on behaviors that would enhance their team dynamics. We also explored various approaches for resolving conflict and for giving and receiving feedback. To ensure that the Leadership Team members were comfortable challenging each other and providing honest feedback, we role-played a wide range of scenarios.

ProMelior dedicated a full workstream to enhancing the quality of the Leadership Team meetings. A meeting charter was developed which defined the purpose of the Leadership Team meeting as a management forum to drive strategic initiatives and exchange information about the business operations. The time of the meeting was changed to one that was more convenient for all the participants given their diverse geographic locations. The meeting was also conducted by videoconference to enhance the quality of engagement and commitment was made for the whole team to meet in person at least once every quarter. As one of the few analytical members of the Leadership Team, the CFO was appointed as the facilitator. His role was to set the meeting agenda, manage time and circulate minutes. In consultation with the CEO, he was responsible for ensuring that the agenda each week struck a good balance between forward-looking strategic topics as well day-to-day operational topics.

The final component of developing the Leadership Team was a year-long program of coaching program for each executive. The leaders followed ProMelior's 4-Step Coaching Journey (Awareness-Motivation-Capabilities-Performance) to break-through capability barriers and achieve a higher level of professional performance. During the Coaching Journey, ProMelior's certified coaches helped the executives identify their strengths and weaknesses before generating a set of motivating yet realistic goals. The executives were then asked to map out the key activities required to achieve these goals with an emphasis on the ones that would be most challenging. The coaching sessions then focused on preparing executives to succeed in these difficult situations through intensive capability-development exercises and role plays. Where possible, ProMelior coaches also observed the executives in important professional events in order to provide feedback/coaching based on their performance in 'real-life' events.

Over the course of the 1-year program the Leadership Team became more confident in its capabilities and was more able to rally together to address big challenges and new opportunities. Instead of harboring silent tensions, the team was able to address its problems and celebrate successes. The blend of Leadership Team training and 1:1 executive coaching led to a marked improvement in individual and overall business performance.