

Implementing Change through the use of Dialogue

Background

As part of a larger organisational initiative in the energy industry vertical of Tieto, a leading Nordic software and services company, the Vice President of a division, with activities in three different countries supplying the utility industry, had the challenge of integrating a newly acquired business, which would essentially double the size of their current business. The integration would mean downsizing about 40% of staff, while still keeping the remaining staff motivated and energised, making them feel part of the new organisation and keeping “ordinary business” going without negative performance impact.

Approach

A common way of addressing such integration situations in this organisation’s culture would be for management to fly in and make a presentation. The presentation would contain a vision for the future, the business objectives, and the new organisational structure. The Divisional Manager wanted a new way of approaching the situation.

While we were delivering a Leadership Development program for the divisional management team, we started to explore new ways of approaching this business integration together with the team by engaging them in facilitated dialogue and a process of exploration, analysis and elimination. During this process, the Vice President together with his Country Manager decided to try this very process as a tool in the integration process. This is how the VP describes the situation in his own words:

“The sessions with you required me to reflect, and that led to entirely new ideas than I would have otherwise got to. Much more profound. Your sessions sparked a lot of thoughts, to think in entirely new ways. They provided the inspiration to handle the integration differently. We did not do what was perhaps expected – the usual way of handling these situations, because we came to new insights about the impact that we all have as leaders.”



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European

Professional

Personal

Outcome

This all resulted in the planning and implementation of weekly meetings where the management team would meet with the staff in the newly acquired business in open sessions where a hundred or so people in the new organisation had the opportunity to ask any and all kinds of questions. These sessions were run on a regular basis over a period of three months

Summing up, it resulted in an integration that went extremely smoothly, quickly and is currently being heralded as an example of success in other divisions of the larger organisation. One of the country directors later summed up his learning as follows: "I've learned about the small things which actually have a huge impact."



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