

CASE STUDY FOR MANAGEMENT TRAINING - MAJOR IT SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTOR



How 'SPRINT'ing with apt improved management effectiveness and released growth potential.

This case study shows how Advantage Performance Training Ltd helped a major fast growing software distributor change the way the management team operated, improving their operational performance and enabling management to continue to grow the company.

Situation

The company started by the current Managing Director some 15 years ago had grown from a £10m turnover to £55m in five years.

Now part of an international group the business had significant potential.

The challenge was to enable them to grow to a £250m turnover in the next 4 years.

Problem

Operating in a traditionally low margin business, growth was presenting a number of operational problems resulting in lower margins and slowing of growth rates. Potential was significant and not being realised.

Key issues were:

"Improving and developing a consistency to management and management processes"

"Improving and developing the management to provide a consistency to customer contact and service, including account development processes at lower levels in the organisation"

Research

2 members of the apt team spent time with various members of the management team and staff to establish the key issues and opportunities.

An assessment by apt concluded:

Management have grown with the company and learned skills "on the job". In a number of cases they have followed the "model" set for them by their manager, supplemented by their own experience.

1. Managers are operating "one level down" from their role in the organisation. As they have progressed some managers find themselves 'doing' rather than 'managing'. At director level this had lead to less attention to development of detailed strategy and in functional areas lack of cohesion for the overall strategy.
2. Directors and Managers tended to operate within their disciplines. This gave rise to a "silo" mentality causing dysfunctional structures or processes with resultant low efficiencies and higher costs.
3. There was no clear management appraisal and development system throughout the organisation.
4. Communication across teams and in some cases within teams was poorly structured.

5. There was a need for more effective planning, involving other team members and other teams.
6. As the business grew there was an increasing need for a wider and wider range of skills at management level. Given the rapid growth of the business and its need to respond to a fast moving market this became a key issue.

Key objectives were developed and agreed with the board of directors.

INitiative

Management were encouraged to develop better internal company communications within the various operational teams. Internal management meeting effectiveness increased dramatically.

Managers developed their own visions for their areas of e-business which galvanised the performance of team members and improved the operational efficiency of the business.



Training

A challenging management development programme was developed consisting of a series of two and one-day modules specifically designed to effect the changes required from the research.

Modules were developed for two main management groups – directors and senior managers, first level and middle management consisting of:

- A Directors Senior Executive Strategic Seminar

- Essential Management Skills Modules - with Emphasis placed on planning and organisation, the effectiveness of teams, leadership and teambuilding issues, motivation and empowerment.

- Personal Effectiveness - to ensure delegates knew how to adopt working methods that will make them more effective.

- Performance Management - setting and monitoring key results areas and key performance indicators and the ways in which people can be developed to reach higher performance levels.

- Effective Meetings - to reduce and improve the effectiveness of those that were held.

Delegates were required to identify projects for improvement within their areas of responsibility and apply the tools and techniques learned.

So what did the Client get from association with apt?

The results were far greater than expected and had wider reaches. The business grew from £55M to over £120M within two years. The target of £250m is now easily within reach.

All existing management were developed so as to be able to achieve significant profit improvement. Costs of operational inefficiency were substantially reduced.

Management became an integrated motivated team.

All the issues identified by apt were successfully overcome within the first year. As a result apt are now working with other group subsidiaries effecting similar change.