

Consequences of Whole Brain Empowerment

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Company: British Alcan Aluminum Recycling Plant

Type and nature of the case:

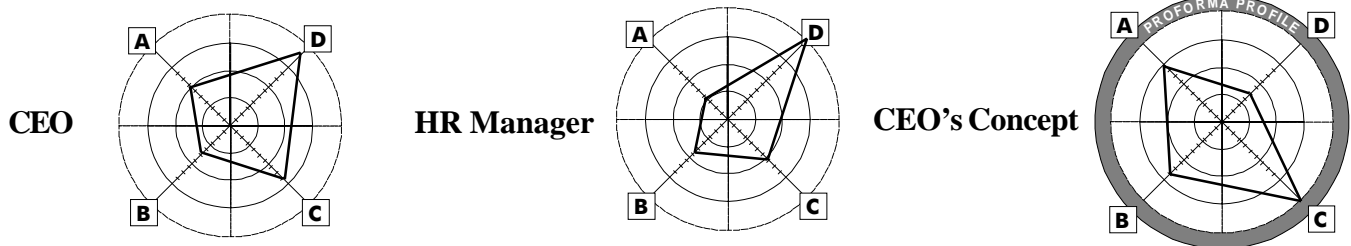
The plant site was a brand new twenty-four hour shift operation. It was at the leading edge of the recycling technology. The CEO also wanted it to be at the leading edge of an effective management/employee culture: one that resulted in both high productivity, and high employee satisfaction.

Purpose:

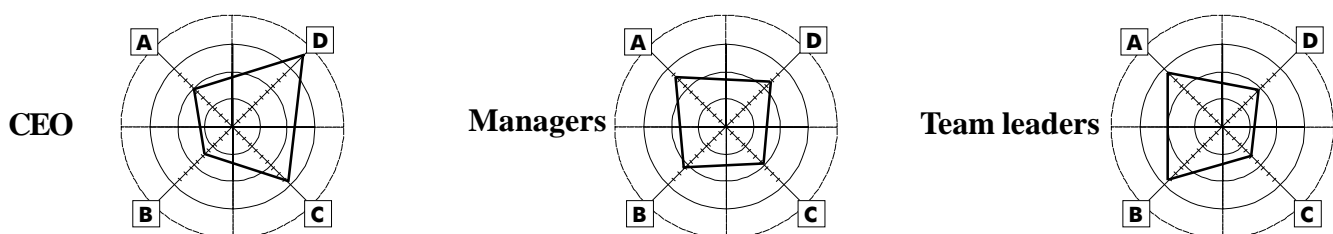
Apply whole brain training methods and techniques to help the CEO build a plant-wide culture based on his personal concept of human relations in order to achieve his desired business results.

Existing conditions:

Mike, the CEO, working with the HR Manager, Donald, created a concept that was the basis for the recruitment and training of all employees in the new plant. Note the proforma profile of the CEO's concept shown in the graphic below.



A cascade approach was used to staff the plant. For example, the management team was selected and trained first. And then they selected and trained the team leaders, who in turn selected and trained the operators. The organization structure was headed by the CEO, followed by one layer of managers, in turn followed by one layer of team leaders, then the operators. The HBDI was used for the induction and training of all employees. The following profiles of the CEO and the averages for the managers and team leaders reveals a significant gap between Mike and his managers in the C quadrant.



Desired outcomes:

Short term: Help the CEO achieve the planned organizational culture that he desires.

Long term: Work with the CEO, his managers, team leaders, and operators to sustain the desired culture and optimize it in terms of high productivity and employee satisfaction.

Whole brain interventions, processes and strategies:

The first major intervention was to induct all the employees into the CEO's concept which was sharply different from the traditional "command and control" management that most of the new employees had experienced in their previous jobs. This induction process followed the cascade approach that had been used in recruiting and selecting the employees. Thus, once Mike, the CEO, had selected his eight managers, a three module program was designed and delivered to communicate the leadership style needed to make the approach work effectively. Each module lasted two days. The HBDI and the Whole Brain model were used in the first module as the foundation on which to build everything else. So, module #1 insured that each manager had his personal profile; the team explored its team profile; and the need to value differences was established as the key to achieving the desired culture. Modules #2 and #3 covered the selection and training of staff; team building, communication, decision making, and continuous improvement techniques. In retrospect, the vital part of this leadership training was the process rather than the content. That is, by designing and delivering the training in a whole brain way, the managers were able to experience the concept in practice — the training didn't do anything to them, it empowered them to manage their own learning by using the Whole Brain model.

This series of training modules was re-run for the team leaders, once they had been recruited by the managers. For the operators, the training comprised two modules, each of two days duration — the first one was very similar to that run for the managers and team leaders, and again placed major emphasis on valuing differences in building creative teams by using the Whole Brain model to demonstrate how to realize both individual and collective potential. The second module focused on team work and continuous improvement; participation; communication and empowerment regarding decision making — in particular, the need to take ownership and accept responsibility and create a blame-free, failure-free climate of support. These training modules were central to the induction process. Each employee received a Whole Brain Model wrist watch at the end of the program. Job skills training followed the induction process and was spread over several months. During that period, key communication mechanisms such as team briefings; upward briefings; and employee forums, were put in place to support the CEO. For each of these, a Whole Brain approach was encouraged.