

# Globally Minded Team...

## The Background

When we were asked to work with the Global Purchasing Team of a large design and manufacturing business, we jumped at the chance. An opportunity to travel to Germany where the conference was being held. A chance to work on a global scale!

In taking on this challenge we had committed to move this global group of individuals from being silo-driven to a globally-minded team capable of achieving a targeted purchasing save of £3.5M. An added challenge for us was that the delegates had been drawn from all corners of the world, Mexico, China, India, Romania, Germany, United States and the UK.

Half of the delegates only spoke English as a second language so we had to make sure that our programme would be understandable by everyone. We also committed to ensuring that the team reached consensus on the top global projects for the remainder of the year and developed resource and action plans to deliver on these.

## What Happened

It's probably no surprise that, during their discussions, things soon descended into the Yanks and the Brits dominating the conversations and the other delegates slowly retreating into the background. This resulted in poor contribution by around half the delegates and poorly made decisions and judgements based on the dominant people. It also caused agendas to run hugely over time with a consequence that important sessions got sidelined for other seemingly more important issues. This was again decided predominantly by the dominant group members.

In order to help address some of these issues we turned to our Experiential Learning Activities to highlight the consequences of this behaviour. The team completed a short task, gloating in their excellence until we began to ask about how the team and their contributions were managed. The gloating was replaced by looks of guilt and embarrassment as the dominant members of the team realised they had bulldozed over everyone else. A fantastic reality check that only the experience from such a task could have shown so explicitly. Having then talked about how to overcome these issues, more activities were used to show the difference the learning was making in developing them into a cohesive team.

## The Results

From this point on the team started to develop the process management that allowed them to manage and perform as a whole team. Tasks become more measured, less chaotic and more successful. Their final challenge in the programme was to reach consensus on, and create an action plan for, the top global projects in the business. At this point the team's leader was leaving them to face the challenge alone! They took control of the day's agenda, balanced the team's needs with the task needs and achieved the goal in a quarter of the time it would usually have taken them!

The team now believes it has the potential to smash the original target of £3.5M purchasing save by more than double that original target! They recognise that by thinking more globally instead of locally and regionally they will leverage greater economies of scale than originally anticipated from the projects agreed.

For us, one piece of feedback from a delegate with 30 years service, helped us measure the impact we'd had on the team. He said "as a rule, all consultants should be rounded up together and hung, but you are the exception to that rule".

## What Next

As a result of the impact we had on this team, we have been asked to consider attending all of their future global conferences in order to embed the learned behaviour and turn it into habitual behaviour.

We have also been asked to support the Global Board of Directors, in place of their existing supplier.

## Can we help you?

Are you facing a challenge and would like to talk to someone about it. If so, get in touch and find out how our approach is having dramatic results with companies big and small.

### Get in touch:

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