

Business case 3: Improvement of Team Work

The situation

The company Pharmy is a German pharmaceutical company with 30.000 employees worldwide. The mother company is based in Germany, it is one of the rare family owned businesses in the pharmaceutical industry nowadays. Our client is the project leader of an international Research & Development project with project members based in Germany and the US.

Their challenge is to improve the formula of the forth important product of Pharmy. It is a remedy against asthma, a real blockbuster. On the most important market, the USA, there is a coming new law which asks for a considerable reduction of its CO2 content in production.

The project is existing already for quite a while. Six month before the workshop takes place, several project group members were changed, as well as the project leader.

The demand

The project leader himself is new to the company. He asks synetz-international to support him in setting up this new project group. He describes the new project group as not being able to give each other feed-back, as behaving too cautious with each other, as being not innovative enough. His assumption is, that intercultural patterns could be the reason. He wants a dynamic, open minded, innovative team of people who drive the project forward according to its set timeframe. We agree that telephone interviews will be conducted with all seven project members to find out whether they share his perspective.

Assumptions of synetz-international:

- About half of the project members were part of the old project team – they share a set of shared assumptions how communication should run and what they expect of each other
- The project leader is acknowledged – especially by the german project members.
- The project members in the US feel a little misunderstood by the project leader and also by the other project members. They are part of the line structure in another company - the American daughter company which demands other communication channels.
- Not all project members met each other face-to-face before. All project members feel that the face-to-face kick-off meeting is taking place a little too late.
- All project members are 100 % convinced of the product
- They feel proud of working on its improvement, as it is considered the fourth important contributor to the companys´ success.

Consultant's proposal and intervention

- ☆ The first intervention proposed was conducting interviews with all project members and the project leader.
- ☆ From these interviews assumptions were built by the consultants.
- ☆ The assumptions were fed-back to the project leader and discussed with him. Also the consultants proposed how to go about it. The process was finalised.
- ☆ A two days team development workshop was organised. All project members and the project leader sat together.
- ☆ The assumptions of the consultants were shared with the project members and intensely discussed, whether they apply or not.
- ☆ A long session was organised in which all project members got personally in touch with each other by a so-called "diversity" quiz. It helped to get a more informal insight about each other.
- ☆ One of the most important interventions was a face-to-face clarification of mutual expectations, which helped to set clear rules how to work with each other in future.
- ☆ An informal, excellent dinner in the evening helped to enjoy together.
- ☆ The next day the project members did an outdoor exercise together which supported them in building up more team spirit.
- ☆ During the debriefing session a set of communication rules for the whole team was set up.
- ☆ Towards the end of the workshop the team members were asked to give each other an exclusively positive feed-back – first of all to establish the habit to give feed-back and second to establish an appreciative culture of communication.

Success story

After six months the project leader called and shared that the project team is now working very well together. All feel a high appreciation for each other. The expected results of the project come in time and the project is not at risk any more.

