

Conflicting philosophies polarise progress: what happens when a team's leaders impede success?



Situation

Following the merger of two large pharmaceutical organisations, a new management team had been drawn from the internal pool of talent.

With a key role in the management of clinical trials, this function's VP had empowered the management team to distil the best from both organisations to create a new operating model.

However, frictions and outright conflict within the management team had prevented a clear vision from emerging and robust efforts by HR to resolve the issues had failed. The problems were becoming increasingly acute and beginning to have a detrimental impact on the rest of the team and their internal customers.

Requirement

External intervention was sought to gain deeper insight into the factors impeding management effectiveness, and identify new measures to resolve the personal conflicts fuelling the issues whilst also mitigating the impact on the wider team and their customers.

Approach

Following confidential one-to-one discussions with all of the members of the team, the issues at the heart of the conflict were uncovered and the extent of the management dysfunction was laid bare.

With stark evidence of the consequences of the management behaviours and transparency of the team's concerns, a workshop with the entire team involved them in defining a constructive and inspiring way forward.

Direct interventions were put in place to address the divisions within the management unit. With a deadline for change and clearly defined sanctions if progress was not evident within that time-frame, Mansfield Buchanan was asked to provide interim support for the managers involved.

Impact

By engaging the team members throughout, the imminent risk of losing high calibre individuals was significantly reduced. A 'Team Credo' developed by the team articulated their values and commitment to delivering expertise and excellence to their clinical peers.

The philosophical differences within the management team proved irreconcilable, but the proactive steps taken cleared the way for a strong and united team to emerge, supported by a fresh management structure that flourished within the spirit of empowerment and teamwork.

"There is a constant subtle tussle. No direct countermanding...

...but there is an undercurrent all the time "

Contributor

"The involvement of an outside consultant was critical to remedy the situation in a timely manner.

The team itself emerged more productive, more energized and more united as coherent corporate entity.

Thanks for your assistance and support."

Global Function VP, USA

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