

Leadership Partnership Boosts Performance

The Company

Providing solutions for the optometric needs of people in 70 countries, this N Vision learning partner is a global leader in the research, development and manufacturing of contact lenses and innovative lens care products. Through innovation, the ability to quickly meet market developments and emerging technologies, and a talented, progressive team of more than 6,000 associates worldwide, the group has grown to a company with more than \$1 billion in sales in 2005.

The Situation

Flexibility, adaptability, innovation, close internal cooperation in worldwide R&D as well as streamlined, cost-efficient production processes are crucial for this organization to stay ahead of the global competition. Global leaders have to establish internal networks across the organization and build strong personal partnerships with their peers worldwide in order to withstand the enormous pressure, develop new visions and strategies, increase team performance and exceed set business targets. Cultural differences, geographic distance, and differing agendas had impacted this group's effectiveness in the past and the new German–U.S. management team knew that the right learning could unleash the true potential of this group.

The organization partnered with N Vision Learning Solutions GmbH to bring U.S. and German leaders together in a group learning interventions to help them

- identify how culture (organizational, national and personal) can impact and influence the way German and U.S. colleagues and partners deal with each other,
- look at past business exchanges and develop a common understanding of what and how things went well (best practice exchanges) and what went 'wrong', and
- look forward to upcoming strategic business developments and apply what they had learned to ensure a robust and solid leader's perspective for the future.

The N Vision Learning Solution

The action-oriented learning intervention introduced pragmatic strategies and techniques on how to do business with German and American leadership colleagues and included simulations, facilitated discussions, and actual critical incidents from their business. One key objective was to help German–American leaders recognize that national culture can lead to misunderstandings, however corporate culture, individual personalities and past history can also contribute to inefficiencies in the group that were, in the past, simply labelled 'cultural problems'.

The Results

The U.S. and German teams are now working closer together than ever before. Due to open and authentic dialog in this robust partnership subliminal fears and emotional viruses no longer exist. This global team has significantly improved its performance, thanks to the knowledge exchange and support between the U.S. and German leaders. The German-U.S. partnership has been extended to jointly helping the Singapore leadership team to improving performance in the organization's Asian production facilities. Again, the deep commitment of senior management ensured that this learning solution was given a top priority this group's business agenda.