

Organisational Development

Client:	Railway equipment manufacturer
Sector:	Engineering
Project:	Fast Track
Themes:	Leadership
Audience:	Senior leaders reporting to the Board
Locations:	UK
Duration:	2007 – 2009

The Organisation

Our client develops and manufactures rail signalling and locomotive control systems for mainline and metro-based railways across the world. A UK-based subsidiary company within the a global group, it has a 140 year history and employs approximately 1,800 people worldwide.

The Project Context

Conscious of changing markets in terms of both exports and technology, our client realised that fundamental changes in approach and culture to a traditional business were required. The company's MD also identified that the layer of management below the Board needed a greater voice in the strategic direction of the business.

In 2006, a Leadership Challenge Event held to engage senior staff in leading these cultural changes led to the commissioning of the Fast Track Leadership Programme designed to develop the behaviours required of Organisational Leaders:

- creating momentum and mobilising people towards a vision for the future
- providing clear goals and direction for the organisation and supporting managers in aligning teams to strategy
- championing change and creating enthusiasm, feelings of ownership and a desire to excel in others.

The Requirement

In 2007, ASK was retained to design and deliver a bespoke leadership programme, using a strong behavioural focus to embed the key characteristics leadership teams would need to take the business forward. Programme content needed to be clearly aligned to context, culture and processes, and include a strong experiential element to allow for practise of new leadership skills.





The Solution – Fast Track Leadership Programme (FTLP)

ASK's interventions were designed using our Stage-based Behavioural Transformation (SBT)[™] methodology to produce a 10-month, three phase, highly practically-focused development programme that supported participants as they contemplated, prepared for and acted on their behaviour change priorities.

The programme Launch Event workshop demonstrates senior management support: the Managing Director sets out the imperative for change and aligns the programme objectives with the business strategy. Members of the Board then act as Mentors to participants throughout the programme.

Drawing on reflective exercises, diagnostic questionnaires and discussion of learning goals with their mentors, the **Me and My Team** workshop explores participants' key leadership challenges and helps them plan the actions needed to improve their performance as team leaders. To put their learning and planning into practice, each participant subsequently delivers a personally stretching project linked to business objectives that address our client's strategic challenges, supported by facilitated Action Learning Sets.

Again supported by pre-event work, the **Organisational Leadership** workshop helps participants translate the company's Vision and Strategy into a personal Leadership Vision, uses FIRO-B[®] to explore how to improve their personal relationships, and raises their strategic awareness

and influencing skills using a Group Project aimed at providing a team response to a strategic issue that would significantly enhance the company's medium to long term performance. Action Learning Sets support participants in delivering these projects, which enable them to experience different functions and build effective cross-company networks.

In the final phase, participants report back to members of the Board on individual progress and to recommend actions from the Group Projects.

Evaluation

ASK Elephant[®] enabled our client to track participants' progress against their development goals and assess the impact of the programmes on the business.

At the end of the programme, 100% rated themselves as either 'more' or 'much more effective', and 76% of participants felt there had been significant or very significant business impact as a result of the programme (the remaining 24% feeling there had been some).

There is now a sense of a growing Leadership Group beyond the Executive Team that is thinking and acting strategically, challenging the status quo, looking for solutions to business issues and taking proactive action to lead the business in delivering its 5 year plan. The growth of cross functional networks and a 'One Company' mindset have been commonly remarked benefits of the programme.

Delegate quotes

"Action learning sets – opportunity to interact with Senior Managers from around the business in a semi-formal forum. I found this very useful for a number of reasons not least because it gave me better view of the pressures others were under; i.e. I was not on my own."

"The programme has helped me to take a much more objective and considered view of priorities (both personal

and business wide). The level of 'firefighting' that I have been involved in over the course of the last 12 months has tended to distort my perception of the most important aspects of my role, leading to a focus on short term problems and a propensity to get involved in low level activities. I have now raised my sights, re-assessed the way that I operate and feel that I have a better opportunity to influence events rather than being driven by them."