develop global

CASE STUDY:
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Develop Global has a long-term partnership with an industry software organisation, leading amongst a range of management and leadership training programmes their flagship Global Leadership Development Programme. This annual high-profile programme develops the leadership and commercial skills of global senior managers who meet for a weeklong workshop.

The programme includes:

- Pre-work
- Essential leadership skills and commercial development
- A business simulation working in cross functional leadership teams
- Exploration of key business issues
- Giving and receiving personal feedback
- Negotiation skills
- Marketing
- Strategic planning and strategic thinking

The output from the programme is fed into an Executive Review which leads to career moves and business assignments.

The programme itself is highly innovative consisting of a large group (36 participants) working as groups, teams and individuals on a series of tasks including a two-day business simulation. The simulation is unique, highly complex which tests senior managers to their maximum capacity. Six groups of six people take on roles such as Chief Executive, Sales and Marketing, Production, Supply Chain, Quality and Finance. They compete against each other to deliver sustainable competitive advantage over a simulated four-year period, with markets, pricing and circumstances changing, as they would in the real world. Integrated into the production elements of the company is the need for innovation and problem solving as they need to create systems and tools to solve a series of challenges.

The programme is reviewed annually and refreshed to take into account changing internal and external circumstances. For the most recent programme, we were asked to incorporate a session on Employee Engagement as this was a key goal for the organisation. The initial client proposal was for a discussion session during a 'leadership input' day to explore the feedback from the Employee Engagement Survey. We worked with the client to build the session but also proposed that there would be more impact and effect if we incorporated Employee Engagement into the Business Simulation. This was seen as high risk as the Business Simulation was already a packed highly organised event and that there might be some resistance to bringing in extra elements. We also had feedback that the managers saw

Employee Engagement as HR's responsibility, so our recommendation was that we did something radical to change perceptions. Our proposal, which was accepted, was that we did a traditional leadership session on engagement exploring the survey, underlying causes and results. Then, during the middle of the simulation, we gave all the teams an additional task around employee engagement, taking the top three issues from the real survey and making them issues that they were facing in their organisation. The next morning, they were to present to a panel their Action Plan on how they intended to address the engagement issues. The result was that the Director for Global Employee Engagement had senior managers competing to come up with innovative and practical suggestions which have now been incorporated into a group action plan. The nominated presenters from each group have become part of a focus group to continue to engage and embed senior management in engagement actions.

The Director responsible has been delighted. Also, one of the senior managers who gave feedback on the programme that they felt it was an unwelcome interruption has since emailed to say they now recognise the value and also that employee engagement it a management and not just an HR issue.