

ORIGINAL SITUATION

Fujifilm needed to combine the managers from Fuji and newly-acquired large, independently owned distributors to lead a single, cohesive technical service unit while dealing with challenges of change through a merger.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

Fujifilm was successful in retaining 99% of their managers by helping them understand change and its impact, presenting tools and techniques for dealing with change, and training the managers to bring these messages to the field force. Adopting the consultative selling process has added a hundred-thousand dollars plus to the bottom line.

SEG's Commitment to Success at Fujifilm Graphic Systems Inc., USA.

Successfully Navigating Change.

Neil Johnson, Vice President of Technical Solutions and Support for Fujifilm Graphic Systems Inc. USA, was faced with the challenge of merging several large, independently-owned distributors into a single, cohesive technical service unit. The new group was to be led by a combination of managers from Fuji and its newly-acquired distributors. Confident that team building was crucial, Johnson sought advice from Daryl Franks, Manager of Learning and Development for Fujifilm Graphic Systems Inc. USA.

Franks suggested contacting Joane Ramsey of Strategic Enhancement Group. He had worked with Ramsey several years earlier to create a professional development curriculum that eventually included *Social Styles* and *Supervisory Leadership Series* based on the results of a 360 degree feedback effort facilitated by Strategic Enhancement Group.



RESULTS ACHIEVED



"When I contacted Joane, I explained that I wanted to discuss how Strategic Enhancement Group might be able to help me build effective teams in the new organization. I expected her to respond with a list of offerings. Instead, she said that she couldn't make a recommendation until she had a better understanding of the issues," Johnson recalls. "I was impressed by that approach."

The result was a comprehensive discovery process that covered a variety of topics including the goals of the new organization, the history and cultures of all of the companies involved and the ideal culture that Fuji was hoping to create. Ramsey also asked how employees were reacting to the changes. Based on this information, Ramsey came up with a completely different recommendation - the most critical need was helping employees accept and embrace change. Team building was secondary.

Challenge of Change

"Dealing with the emotional side of change is crucial to the success of any merger or major organizational change. Unfortunately, many companies focus exclusively on the operational side of a merger or reorganization and neglect the emotional impact on employees," explained Joane Ramsey, a Performance Consultant for Strategic Enhancement Group.



Ramsey added this isn't particularly surprising since business managers are more comfortable dealing with concrete, definable action steps such as identifying efficient reporting relationships, establishing long-term goals and determining productivity standards. "Getting a handle on the emotional commitment of hundreds of employees who are affected by the change is less concrete and can be much more difficult," she said.

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Vice President, Fujifilm Graphic Systems Inc. USA

According to Ramsey, employees in a changing environment are typically less concerned about "the big picture" for the new organization than they are about how the change will affect them personally. "It comes down to the central question: what's in it for me? If employees are left to struggle with that question on their own, productivity drops. Research shows that employees who are dealing with major changes will typically spend about 80% of their time trying to figure out what's happening, leaving just 20% of their time for work."

Short-Circuiting the Rumor Mill

Recognizing that accepting change and creating a shared culture begins at the highest levels of an organization, the Strategic Enhancement Group solution focused on bringing together approximately 30 managers in the newly-formed service organization for an off-site meeting. The goal was to help managers understand change and its impact, present tools and techniques for dealing with change, and train the managers to bring these messages to more than 120 members of the field force. The group also worked together to create a shared vision and mission to guide the new group through the upcoming transition.

Using the *Dealing with Change* course as its foundation, Ramsey and Bob Parks, General Partner at Strategic Enhancement Group, who would facilitate the session, worked closely with Johnson to develop the agenda, focusing on helping participants deal with change and teaching skills needed to help their staffs, in turn, embrace change. Ramsey and Parks also recommended using *Innovator* technology, a real-time, anonymous polling tool, to isolate important concerns and help the group come to a

COMPANY PROFILE

The holding company for U.S. based Fujifilm companies operates in 27 states and is engaged in the research, development, manufacture, sales and service of Fujifilm products. The company serves a broad spectrum of industries in the U.S. including medical and life sciences, electronic, chemical, graphic arts, information systems, motion picture, broadcast and photography.

consensus on a shared vision. Ramsey added that this technology also helped reinforce that management was genuinely interested in employees' concerns.

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According to Johnson, the session “was a great way to identify how people truly felt about the changes in a risk-free environment. There were definitely some surprises.”

Johnson said, “Bob did a great job facilitating the workshop. As an objective resource, he kept the discussions focused on what we had in common, not on our differences. From the outset he told everyone ‘you are a management team.’ He repeated it over and over throughout the workshop. By the time we left, everyone believed it and had a very clear vision of where we were going and how we would get there.”

Before returning to their offices, participants were paired up by discipline and encouraged to mentor each other over the coming months to help ensure that employees' concerns were being addressed and the shared vision was communicated. Weekly conference calls, facilitated by Parks, allowed team members to share ideas and reinforce key messages. They also helped Johnson keep tabs on the emotional state of the entire group.

Since the first session, Johnson has asked the Strategic Enhancement Group team to return every year to conduct an *Innovator* session to elicit honest feedback on team members' concerns, alignment with the group's vision, and assess where the group has been and where it's headed. “It helps me stay connected and tells the team that I value their feedback and opinions,” said Johnson.

When asked if he considers the effort effective, Johnson notes that the numbers speak for themselves. “Despite a challenging atmosphere, multiple mergers and layoffs, 99% of the management team is still here. I consider that success.”

Into the Future

Johnson sees Strategic Enhancement Group as an important partner in Fuji Graphics Systems' continuing success. “We get together regularly to check in, discuss how things are going and look ahead. Their extensive business experience makes Strategic Enhancement Group a great resource. I know I can depend on them to be honest and frank in their answers,” he said.

Those discussions led to a recent, highly-successful initiative to add consultative selling to the service department's repertoire.

“Our people are called in because there's an issue that needs to be resolved. This could be an excellent sales opportunity if the employees have the tools and skills they need to be successful. When we first began exploring the possibility of using technical personnel as a sales force, we decided to bring in Strategic Enhancement Group to help us decide if that strategy made sense,” he said.

Not surprisingly, Parks and Ramsey recommended starting at the beginning – gathering information about customers' needs and preferences. This discovery effort included one-on-one interviews, as well as hosting several focus groups designed to hone in on key concerns and issues, including validating that the products and services being offered responded to the customers' needs, and determining customers' openness to working with consulting technicians.

With research bearing out the company's plans, Strategic Enhancement Group recommended tailoring its *Consultative Sales Process (CSP)* course to help selected employees learn to uncover and address specific customer needs before taking the next step of making a specific product recommendation. The Strategic Enhancement team also grew to include Ron Schild, a facilitator and former sales manager with 35 years of experience, to help Johnson create a new sales culture.

Using the *Hiring the Best* assessment process and personal interviews, the team helped Johnson handpick the best candidates out of a pool of 66 employees who had expressed an interest in the dual role.

"A successful salesperson needs to have both the skill and the will to sell. Most assessments focus exclusively on identifying skills. *Hiring the Best* adds a component that assesses a candidate's drive, their willingness to put in the extra time and energy needed for success," explained Ramsey.

Initially, ten candidates were identified and trained in the consultative sales process, with another eight completing the training. Bi-weekly coaching calls, facilitated by Strategic Enhancement Group team members, help reinforce key skills with both sales managers and the newly trained consulting technicians. The calls give participants the chance to discuss real-life situations, access the experiences of others, evaluate their success and set realistic goals.

After just eight months, the consultative sales process is already paying off handsomely. In 2005, the group added sales of several hundred thousand dollars to Fujifilm Graphic Systems Inc. USA's bottom-line. 2006 was projected to at least triple that number.

An Ongoing Partnership

As Fuji Graphics Systems continues to evolve, Johnson sees many opportunities to expand the skills and role his group will play in the company's success. And, he sees Strategic Enhancement Group as an ongoing partner in those changes.

"Who knows, perhaps I'll even get that team building initiative someday," Johnson joked. "I'm confident they'll let me know when the time is right."

To learn more about these concepts and how Strategic Enhancement Group, Inc. can help you in addressing these issues, contact us at **(630) 377-4300, (888) 668-9382** outside of IL or StrategicEnhancement.com.