



## Rapid Performance Improvement for Microsoft Central Europe

### Organization Description

- Nine hundred person, seven country organization with offices in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic/Slovak Republics, Hungary, and Russia.
- Six person Senior Management Team, 17 next-level Managers.
- Bright, aggressive, highly proficient work force of various cultures, ages and professional specialties.

### Situation

- Fast growing, quickly changing computer and software markets in Western and Eastern Europe must be aggressively dealt with in order to maintain Microsoft Central Europe's leadership position.
- Differing management and operating cultures across seven office locations: Munich, Zurich, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Moscow. Complicated communication, common vision, strategies and goals.
- Different age groups, experience levels among many bright, even brilliant people brought forth strongly held diverse opinions.
- Bill Gates and his management team expected action, results and continuing market impact from the Central Europe Unit as well as other units around the world. Competitive advantage would be rewarded.

### Approach/Process

- Senior Management agreed to combine the annual celebration of results with an opportunity for the entire organization, from seven countries, to participate in five critical operations projects.
- Fast Track (90 day) Teams were organized and simultaneous kicked-off in a two day workshop to address customer, communication, sales & distribution, product and operating policy issues.
- Each Team presented their mission, objectives, a thirty-day progress report and the opportunities for involvement at a company-wide meeting in Prague. Each team occupied a separate ballroom, and presented and discussed their project while associates moved from room to room signing up to help with activities of interest.

- Upon completion of the critical 90-day projects, Senior Management and the next management levels, clearly seeing what the organization could accomplish, forged a common vision through several interactive sessions.

## **Outcomes**

- A common, heartily endorsed Vision was agreed-to by a broad cross section of MSCE:

*"MSCE will become 'THE GREAT SUB'"*

(A leading non-US operating unit)

- Successful movement toward the Vision was measured in terms of specific customer, product, distribution, team and market achievements.
- Within 18 months this cross-cultural group had achieved the coveted Presidents Award for GREAT SUB.
- Different Country professionals were learning from each other and stimulating further successes.

## **Business Results**

- Reduced average sales cycle of major product/service from 5 months to 2 months.
- Reduced Technical Support average phone waiting time from 30+ minutes to 30 seconds despite a dramatic increase in demand and with only a 5% increase in personnel.
- Streamlined distribution, simplifying update procedures for customers from 21 options to 3.
- Improved revenue and market share.

## **Customer Quotes**

*"J. Allen and his associates helped us coordinate significant, quick customer linkages and company improvements across seven countries, including newly released communist entities."*

*"We received the coveted 'Presidents Award for Outstanding Microsoft Sub'."*

CEO

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