

Implementing Performance Management Following Merger – Middle East

The Situation

A major global company in primary industry (cement, construction aggregates and concrete) had recently acquired a fast-growing subsidiary in the Middle East. Viewing effective leadership as the primary barrier to its international growth, the parent company wanted to act quickly to engage Board members and senior managers from its new operating companies around the region with its strategic Performance and Talent Management (PTM) processes.

Richard Smith Associates were invited to collaborate with the Regional HR Director and his team to develop and deliver engagement and learning processes to align the PTM culture of the new acquisition with that of the parent company.

The Analysis

Conversations took place with the HR Director, his head of Learning and Development and with a small selection of Board members from operating companies. These indicated that the new subsidiaries had only recently introduced their own PTM processes and that if they were to engage with the new parent company's approach they needed to be convinced that this would add value.

It was also clear that skill levels for discussing performance with senior staff and commitment to taking clear development actions – both needed by the parent company for strategic objectives – needed to be enhanced. Direct discussion of performance was culturally difficult, and workshop design must not place senior people in a position where they might lose face.

The Solution

With the active support of key Board members from the newly-acquired company, case studies were designed as the basis for practical performance review discussions. These included exemplar job briefs of key senior managers in a fictitious operating company, together with supporting narrative evidence of performance (in the form of c.v.s, memos, file notes and e-mails). A workshop was designed during which groups of 6-12 Directors and Senior Managers could analyse the individual and business issues raised by these cases and (using Richard Smith Associates' proprietary "tag interviewing" process) practise the skills and behaviours needed to conduct PTM discussions with senior staff.

The Outcomes

A series of workshops was conducted jointly by Richard Smith Associates and the Regional HR Director. The opportunity to align their approach in this practical way was appreciated and respected by the Directors and senior managers who participated. The first round of PTM reviews that followed soon afterwards delivered noticeably effective action plans. These met the needs of both the operating companies concerned and the parent organisation.