

Corporate Culture Transformation case study

Emirates Hotels and Resorts

A member of the Emirates group

The problem:

Emirates Hotels and Resorts was about to open its flagship property. There are over 280 employees from 32 different nationalities and each with different hotel training with different service styles. The hotel will be operational in 4 weeks and everyone is frantically running around to complete their tasks by extra short deadline. Yet, despite efforts of management to align and create a unified vision, let alone culture, there was no unified identity and individuals were acting and reacting as individuals and not as a cohesive force. Emirates wanted a cohesive force that provided an exclusive type of service in line with the Emirates philosophy.

The background:

When people are “busy” or “stressed” they tend to be on autopilot, they react to situation after situation and force feeding values and missions will have little effect. Traditional “Change Management” approaches apply the “change the policies, reinforce them, then eventually behavior will change” while this does work, it takes too long often highly resisted, and therefore most of the time gets abandoned in the process.

The solution:

A new approach to changing and keeping a culture uses Directive Communication Psychology to cultivate chain reaction change within the organisation itself. There are # steps in the process:

Step 1 – senior management must be committed to the RESULT and not to their own egos or hard fast way of doing things. In this case, the management had the commitment.

“I probably need to pinch myself to know that this is me. This program has changed the way I think, the way I deal with people. I’m not as impatient and stressed out like I used to be. Every situation now makes me pause to think of the appropriate way to address it. This program is a must!”

Andre Leung
Administration Manager

“The whole hotel is teeming with an energy that is truly exhilarating. I think the program is so successful because it calls on the significance and substance of people rather than on material things and that is what service is all about. The revolutionary attitude and group dynamics that came out of this program can put into every aspect of our work across all departments and every stage of the operations.”

Bruno Hivon,
General Manager

“This program has far exceeded our expectations, it has managed to achieve more in 2 weeks what we have been trying to implement for the past 6 months. It has added a new dynamic in the whole approach to establishing a service culture.

Martin Le Roux,
Manager Planning, Projects & Development

Step 2 – discover the factors that are bothering the majority of the people. besides the usual “we want more money”, some of the real issues became apparent such as an impression that respect was lacking between managers and subordinates. Additionally, many felt that their input was valuable yet no one listened – there was already an open door policy from the GM, but no one used it... hmm. Senior management is consulted and pre-determine the guidelines that can be accepted for instant implementation of new initiatives.

Step 3 – Discover who are the positive and negative Key Influencers. In this case we identified a total of 22 positive Key influencers and 2 negative ones.

Step 4 – Apply the DC Revolution strategy by separating the total group into 2 groups of 12. This process incorporates six 1-day experiential trainings, each followed by 1-day onsite implementation and dissemination of experience gained at the workshop. The process incorporated the psychological tools on how individuals could achieve their own personal emotional and life goals through their work and related their own success as a function of successfully cooperating with others. In an experiential environment, key influencers become aware of the effects they have had on their environment and how that has affected their lives and success. They take responsibility for their world and no longer blame others for their problems.

Step 5 – Address the emotional issues found in the discovery process. This is done through creating Guiding Principles that they extract from their interactions with others in the organisation. They become the representatives for the people.

Step 6 – Have coaches on site to assist in the dissemination of information and implementation into the work processes. Each key influencers works with 5 others to implement what they have learned and those 5 then work with 3 to 5 others. In essence, the key influencers become the consultants and the coaches simply assist these “in-house consultants” to be effective.

Step 7 – have a half day session where the entire organisation attends. The key influencers perform scenes from work environment that all can relate to and how the difficulties are overcome with the new knowledge that everyone has attained through the program. Key influencers also present changes proposed by them and the other staff to senior management

Step 8 – senior management accepts the initiatives proposed – why? Because they have fallen within the guidelines that were preset by the senior management in the discovery process step 2

The end result was that the people felt totally empowered, they felt like they were part owners in the organisation and personally benefited from its success. 5 months later employees were still volunteering for extra duties (without pay) and were still confidently and passionately working as a unified culture they embraced.