

Creating a Mission-based Operating Model

The Context

- In 2008 Trader Media Group (TMG) had an established corporate vision and had established five strategic priorities for growth. Some priorities had clear functional ownership. Others required the active collaboration of one or more executive members.

Key issues

- TMG's vision was brief and clearly expressed, although success could be interpreted in different ways. The company's operations were undoubtedly effective and the company were market leaders in their field of used automotive publications. The 5 strategic priorities were expressed in clear and simple terms and everyone was aware of what they were. From the perspective of senior management it all sounded coherent and tidy.
- TMG set annual budgets and individual performance objectives but the connections between them were unclear.
- Accountability for delivery leadership of the 5 strategic priorities was very clear when the priority sat predominantly in one function but was cloudy where they did not. There was limited alignment between strategic priorities and what people were actually doing, which meant that functional corners tended to be defended in meetings.

The Solution

- We design a process to create business-wide alignment around TMG's strategic priorities
- We introduced the '5MAP' concept (5 step mission alignment process) to the company's top 60 managers through the 'Leading through Engagement' development programme.
- We delivered the programme to the executive team then facilitated a 5MAP workshop where the CEO used his strategic priorities to give direction and allocate accountability for clear outcomes to his reports.
- Executive members completed their own analysis of what was required to deliver the strategic priorities, using a common process, and shared it with the CEO. We trained HR business partners to facilitate the process then it was replicated within functional teams and led by HR business partners. We provided coaching support, materials and quality control.

The results

- A mission-based operating model centred around the 5MAP process enabled TMG's senior management to focus effort on their strategic priorities. During the global economic crisis and a very challenging trading environment, Trader Media Group delivered outstanding results and growth relative to their competitors in 2009 and 2010. This sharper focus combined with outstanding management enabled the group to deliver a successful year with EBITDA only marginally down year-on-year, which the Chairman described as a positive figure given the market challenges.
- 5MAP is now an integral part of the TMG operating model and supports the translation of high-level business objectives into team and personal accountabilities; this supports aligned individual objectives and is used as the basis for objective setting, performance management and individual development plans.
- Business objectives are reflected in scorecards at all of the divisional executive teams. TMG repeated the alignment process in the 2010 planning round without external support and plans to use it again in 2011 when we will revisit the HR team and upgrade the toolkit and manage an action learning review.
- *"The session really helped to move the exec team forward."* Group HR Director
- *"We have used Leading Change Limited multiple times now at TMG and they always deliver great results. They have been influential in driving focus and structured vision/objective setting programmes."* Director Digital Media
- *"The 5MAP workshop had a great impact. It's a simple model that has introduced a consolidated thinking/approach and given a common language to the TMG leadership team."* Senior Manager (Business Unit Sales Director)
- *"The work that Leading Change has delivered has always been of excellent quality and I have also found that they proactively identify areas where they can add real value and support to TMG. I would highly recommend them."* Group Learning & Development Manager

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