



Achieve Breakthrough

Case Study

Hays Commercial - Information Technology

The Project

The initial project was to systemise a manual payment process. The project had fallen behind schedule and was running two years behind schedule. The client had begun to express concern towards the IT solutions team (contracted by the client) regarding the capability for delivery, contract negotiations and finances between the two parties had stopped and the relationships had become tenuous, defensive and blame-ridden.

The Challenge

Breakthrough's challenge was to re-establish team relationships to enable the success of the project within a six month period. The aim was to create new relationships based on an authentic 'commitment' to the accomplishment of the project, allowing for a speedier resolution of problems, management of individual concerns, which had previously hindered the project's progress.

The Solution

Breakthrough developed project team relationships through one-to-one and group coaching, facilitation of meetings and the introduction of new reporting techniques.

The first step was to facilitate an exploration of the characteristics and constraints of their behaviours and way of relating to them with the team. This support allowed the team to access a new way of working that recognised old debilitating habits when they arose. Once a new way of working had been designed, the team was then 'freed-up' to begin developing an integrated project plan that had team ownership and commitment.

Concurrently, Breakthrough supported the building of an appropriate infrastructure and environment to support the accomplishment of the project plan and maintain the new way of working.

The infrastructure included:

- Creation of a Business Existence System (BES) chart - a tool that supported the team's focus on the leverage points for the project and also enabled easy assessment of results. The BES chart provided an excellent summary report to the project board, enabling them to discuss the key issues.
- New meeting format – implementation of a meeting format that enabled the team to identify key issues for resolution, communicate concerns and make requests of one another to take the project forward. This helped to build an environment of participation, co-ordination and productivity.
- Sub forums - small groups from the project team utilised a Breakthrough process to help them quickly resolve issues. Learning and resolution being the drivers for the process, rather than blame, analysis and justification.
- New reporting format – allowing those responsible for taking action forward to stay clear and focussed and report critical information in a timely manner.

The Results

Due to the creation of the new way of working, and the contribution from all parties, the project accomplished some marked tangible and intangible results:

Tangible Results

- The project was re-instated and the commercial contracts honoured
- The project was completed within the six month deadline
- The total payment process cycle was reduced by 44% from 36 to 20 days
- Capacity increased dramatically by 4 times in some areas

Intangible Results

- Improved relationships between all parties. Mutual respect established, allowing each team member to be heard and participate fully
- Perceptions, determining defensive actions within the team have been broken down and partnership and consultation built
- Issues are jointly resolved effectively, with one clear message for action

The Future

The continuation and further development of a healthy relationship has opened up new opportunities for the client and the IT solutions team working together.

- Negotiations for a long-term 'support & maintenance' contract between the parties have already begun
- The system now has the capacity and flexibility to process high volumes through every stage of the payment process. This provides the client with an opportunity to redesign parts or the entire process to further improve efficiency in all areas

"Breakthrough provided a necessary safety valve and helped everyone work together Breakthrough's contribution to support a strong management approach, driven by a realism not present before, helped the team deliver the project."

Malcolm Mottram, Project Director