

N°12-1 – January 2012

Editorial

The situation:

Highly qualified engineers and several experienced operational managers are appointed to a semi-governmental organization (called hereafter “the Org.”) in the Sultanate of Oman with the mission to help it better run its operations and deliver state-of-the-art service to the end users. After 10 months, some tension occurs, not between the international team and the Omani managers as might be expected, but between several Departments within the Org. into which the international members have been integrated.

Some expatriates are directly heading a Department thus reporting directly to the CEO of the Org. while others are integrated further down in the structure. Thomas is in charge of the largest Department in the Org. and his team more than any other is at the center of operational excellence. He decides to tackle the conflict. His idea is to organize, with our help, a team-building seminar aimed at:

- strengthening his leadership and having his own team members work more closely together
- finding simple and concrete solutions to a set of bilateral issues that exist between his and each of the 4 other departments. In short, restoring mutual trust.

What we did:

We built a 5-day-seminar inviting roughly 30 people from a guest department each day. The first day was dedicated to Thomas’s Operations Department key managers, that is, Regional Directors from all over Oman (picture 1). On top of strategy and objectives for the year, an instant opinion survey was conducted, setting the tone for a very open dialogue and the right to say things (doc. 2). A learning community was set up around Thomas in a very “Bedouin way”, to debrief this first day and those that were to follow (picture 3). Then, from day 2 to day 4, the format of the “issue-solving workshops” was tailored so that each department could express their concerns with equal time and an equal number of people on each side. They were asked to find a common solution that was immediately applicable and acceptable to both Departments. But, they also had to identify all they had in common, all they were proud of (doc. 4)... only to discover that this was much bigger than what was separating them (picture 5). It worked beautifully with strong, wholehearted satisfaction on all sides. Sponsors from each department were empowered by their Directors and their fellow participants to select and testify to the most effective measures proposed by both Departments (picture 6). The executive committee members came on the last day (day 5) to listen to the groups’ selected issues and solutions. At that moment, magic occurred: each Director in charge of a department committed publicly to fully support the recommended solutions (doc. 7). In the final survey, most participants said they felt at the end of the seminar that there were no longer 5 competing departments but a single Omani Org. team proud to fulfill better than before their mission for the good of the Omani population.

We are happy to share a few snapshots with you.



Laurent Lepez, Associate Partner

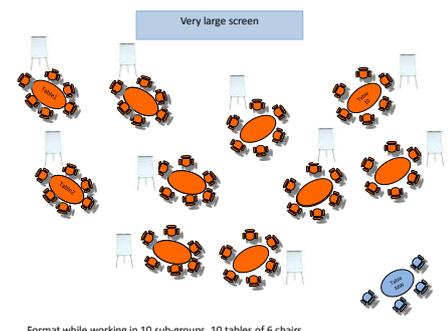
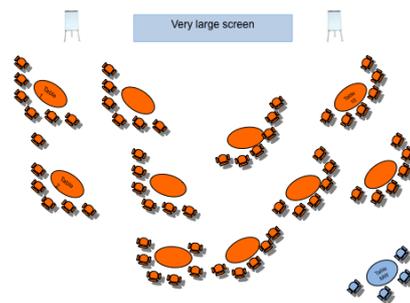
Team-building in the Sultanate of Oman Weaving threads between Omanese

1-First day between us = “the inviting Operations Department”

Managers from the Operations Department, Regional Directors coming from all over Oman...



...plus a flexible and friendly format



Team-building in the Sultanate of Oman Weaving threads between Omanese (continued)

2-An instant opinion survey...

...setting the tone for a very open dialogue and the right to say things

Opinion survey: Results

	Totally disagree	Disagree	SoSo or No opinion	Agree	Totally agree
II – our relationship with the other 4 Departments					
At the moment, I think we have an effective/efficient relationship with Department A	0%	17%	47%	37%	0%
At the moment, I think we have an effective/efficient relationship with Department B	0%	17%	47%	33%	3%
At the moment, I think we have an effective/efficient relationship with Department C	10%	13%	40%	30%	7%
At the moment, I think we have an effective/efficient relationship with Department D	7%	23%	37%	23%	10%

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3-a learning community around Thomas...

...a very "Bedouin way", to debrief this first day and the ones that were going to follow



4-Issue solving workshops + what holds us together

Issues YES of course...but also all that we are proud of!

Our Team building approach

Our approach: How?

□ Part 1 AM – Identifying



Identify issues/problems to be tackled 😞

□ Part 2 PM – Common/Mutual proposals for improvements



...but never forget what works well/ we want to protect/ what we are proud of

□ Part 3 PM – Conclusions/Report of each sub group



Day 1
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM
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5-Inviting and invited Departments together

...only to discover that this was much bigger than what was separating them



6-“Sponsors” from each department

...were empowered to select and testify to the most effective measures



7-a pledge by all the ExCom

...each Director in charge of a department committed publicly to fully support the recommended solutions

Has Team building process worked?

□ Senior Management of 5 departments involved

M. A M. A

M. Y M. B

M. Z

“We give our total support for these recommendations to be implemented as early as possible”

Day 5
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