



Pride, Passion and a Highly Effective Workforce

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About TRW

TRW Automotive is the global leader in automotive safety, producing advanced active systems in breaking, steering and suspension. It also produces sophisticated occupant safety systems such as airbags, seat belts and steering wheels.

The Challenge

The challenge was three-fold. Firstly, the manufacturing site was not fit for purpose, which impacted on staff morale. Secondly, a lack of employer/employee relationships had a detrimental effect on the productivity of the company. And thirdly, there was a lack of investment from the parent company and an order book that was being reduced due to cheaper labour markets in Eastern Europe and the Far East.

Our challenge was to transform all aspects of the business, from its physical appearance right through to the attitude and leadership.

The Process

To transform all areas of the business a three-pronged approach was adopted:

- 1 Developing the vision of the Executive Management team for the business as a whole and their own departments
- 2 Development of a 5-year strategy
- 3 Designing and delivering a business change programme

A charter of team working was developed for each department, which began the process of challenging mind-sets and the engrained beliefs that were inhibiting all areas of the business, followed by 1:1 coaching sessions for the management team (run by Nascent) and a company-wide mentoring system encouraging closer working across previous silos (manufacturing shop floor and support functions).

The use of a Lean methodology for both manufacturing and support promoted a culture of continuous improvement and participation, encouraged by strategic communication through staff/team meetings, newsletters, staff surveys, presentations by the Union and management and family open days.

However, the real change was in mind-sets, which created long-term benefits and a new culture of continuous improvement.

Key outcomes

- > During the first year of this programme productivity rose 12.1% to 99.8% (including a period when the Longbridge Rover site closed, which was a major customer)
 - > Sickness and absenteeism fell to under 4% from a previous high of 9.2%
 - > In 2007 a new production line was added to the site for the first time in 6 years
 - > A change of mind-set that the procurement function does add value both at a Corporate and Business Unit level
 - > Work was moved from the Italian factory to this site
 - > 20 new staff were recruited ending a 4 year sequence of redundancies
 - > Staff satisfaction in the management team rose by over 35% within 2 years
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Summary

The immediate impression of the site (dingy, uncared for, messy, divided work stations) matched the impression given by many of the staff.

However, with a clear vision, 5-year strategy, communication plan and high-level coaching, the business transformed itself into a bright and vibrant environment with a focused workforce (at all levels) that re-engaged back into the community and delivered a viable alternative for the parent company in relation to business development.



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