

High performing culture case study:

Sustaining and strengthening a marketing position



Celgene

Celgene is a global pharmaceutical company that develops and supplies medicines for cancer and inflammatory diseases. Faced with competition from new challengers in the market, the organisation called on Rubica to help it sustain and strengthen its high-performing culture through a bespoke people and culture change programme.

The challenge: supporting a high-performing culture

Celgene employs around 300 people across the UK. Against the backdrop of an increasingly competitive and disruptive commercial landscape, the leadership team was keen to pinpoint the cultural factors that would support high performance in the future and those that would require improvement.

Internally, Celgene didn't have the capacity to deliver this type of specialist change project. A member of the leadership team had previously worked with Miranda Wheatley Price, Rubica's Director of Organisational Change, on a project at another pharma company. As a result, Celgene was confident that Rubica had the experience and expertise to deliver this change programme successfully.

The project involved:

- **Helping the organisation understand its existing culture and mind-set.**
- **Identifying the culture and beliefs that supported or detracted from performance.**
- **Highlighting where leadership and management behaviours enabled or minimised high-performing beliefs.**
- **Recommending tangible culture-enhancing programmes to support the organisation in meeting its strategic goals.**

The solution: getting people on board

"The leadership team was open to change and took a realistic view of the potential obstacles in the way of their ongoing success," says Miranda Wheatley Price, who led the programme for Rubica. "They knew that culture change was necessary in order to achieve their ambitious strategic goals despite challenging commercial conditions."

At the beginning of the process, Rubica achieved buy-in to the change programme by engaging with the leadership team. Having established how an enhanced culture would add value by supporting both people and the organisational strategy, we communicated this message to a broader cross-functional group of 25 people. This group then engaged with staff members across the organisation.

Inquiry into cultural beliefs and mind-sets

The next stage involved running an appreciative inquiry with a mix of representatives from different areas of the business. The aim was to understand the cultural beliefs and mind-sets that were driving day-to-day behaviour. In many organisations, these are often taken for granted yet rarely articulated.

One of the positive findings that emerged was a strong belief that Celgene is making a significant difference to patients' lives, to physicians and to healthcare provision. Staff believed they had the freedom to carry out their work in a way that supported Celgene's commitment to improving patients'

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lives. There was also a clear sense that people took care in how they communicated and interacted with each other.

The inquiry also revealed mind-sets and beliefs that were detracting from high-performing behaviour. One of the most important factors here was the pace of work. It transpired that high-performing people in the organisation responded to this pressure by going the extra mile, but that this could lead to a sense of never-ending deadlines.

Managing pace and pressure

“The outputs from the inquiry informed the analysis and recommendations that followed,” adds Miranda. “We unpicked the cultural beliefs held across the organisation and recommended changes that would help support Celgene through the next phase of its growth.”

One of our key recommendations was to help people manage the pace of work when it threatened to undermine performance. Celgene asked Rubica to develop a programme that would address this challenge. We therefore carried out a series of team resilience workshops for all 300 members of staff in the organisation. This helped people to understand the importance of organisational resilience and gave them tools and strategies to enable them to become more resilient and effective under pressure.

The results: Impressive fast-track culture change

As a result of the culture change programme led by Rubica:

- Teams across the business have improved their prioritisation to enable more focussed effort during periods of pressure and change.
- Individual and team resilience programmes have resulted in people taking greater accountability of their own behaviour and mechanisms to counterbalance work pace.
- Management behaviours have begun to embed and are recognised as supporting a high-performing mind-set.
- The leadership team has implemented many of Rubica’s recommendations to support a high-performing culture.

“Rubica is a trusted partner to the Celgene UK lead team; they have worked in collaboration with us on a culture change project. We would recommend their specialism and partnership to support organisational performance.”

Wim Souverijns, General Manager, Celgene UK

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