

# ROUNDABOUT ROUNDABOUT



## DRIVING PERFORMANCE AT AUSENCO

When the Brisbane-based global engineering firm Ausenco acquired three North American businesses - PSI, Sandwell and Vector – the organisation grew from 350 to 2,500 employees in the space of a few years.

Ausenco's growth was largely fuelled by the mining boom. Then, the global financial crisis hit. When it did, Ausenco had to re-consider its priorities, one of which was their global leadership program. This involved flying senior leaders across the world for executive development. Would you invest that kind of money into global executive development when all hell is breaking loose financially?

Speaking at a Team Management Systems (TMS) sponsored event, Ausenco's Director of Organisational Development, Craig Robinson, spoke passionately about Ausenco's culture of investing in their people. Craig says, "During those tough economic times, our CEO made it clear that we would not stop investing in our people. We are integrating three new businesses that are in separate countries into the organisation. This is not the time to go cheap."

Craig says a key challenge for Ausenco is to make their new global footprint work well for both the organisation and their clients. Today, Ausenco has significant operations across 20 countries. There are more languages, cultures, time differences and diversity around work preferences and team styles to manage. Working with this diversity has been a great challenge for Ausenco.

Craig says, "The Team Management Profile (TMP) has been instrumental in enhancing teamwork and supporting the change process across Ausenco." He has partnered with Conexus Consulting, a Brisbane-based consultancy to deliver an integrated organisational development program across his organisation.



"The Team Management Profile is the tool of choice at Ausenco. There is no other Profile tool used but the Team Management Profile. There is only one methodology that we roll out globally at Ausenco. This creates a common language across the whole business."

Andrew Russell, Conexus Consulting

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## DRIVING PERFORMANCE AT AUSENCO (CONT...)

### FOUR PROGRAMMES

#### 1. Executive Development

At the top level, Craig and Andrew are using the TMP with Ausenco's Executive Team, which includes people like the CEO and CFO. Craig says, "In this program, we talk about team purpose, values and team behaviours. We spend time having the courageous

conversations and we make sure constructive feedback is provided to each other where it is required. The TMP facilitates these discussions superbly because it helps the executive team understand each other and how to work better together. Feedback from the senior team regarding the tool was very positive because it is very solid, yet practical and easy to understand."

#### 2. EmEx

EmEx is the development program for Emerging Executives at Ausenco. Craig explains the EmEx program is targeted at prospective general managers; people who would lead a business line or lead a country for Ausenco.

"The modules have a strategic and practical focus. The participants are formed into groups; they work together for a whole year and we challenge them to identify key growth, expansion and integration opportunities. We use the TMP very early on in the program as a tool for enhancing self-awareness and appreciation of others."

Craig believes the EmEx program has been a huge success. "In the EmEx program, participants are challenged to work on a real-life business case for one year and to return a million dollars ROI per team. So for example, one of the teams recommended entry into the local energy market. They identified a local company that Ausenco could establish a joint venture with. We have now established that joint venture and subsequent alliances and have started converting projects as a direct consequence of that action-learning project. So the EmEx program is potentially self-funding. It has produced real outcomes and a real ROI for Ausenco."

#### 3. MDP (Management Development Program)

Craig says the MDP is an opportunity to build leadership

capability within Ausenco by helping managers transition from a technical to leadership role. In this program, participants perform an online business simulation where they effectively run a business for four years, covering off on the operational aspects as well as the emotional competencies of leading, motivating and team building.

Craig believes the TMP is a practical tool to introduce to participants in the MDP framework at Ausenco. He highlights another key strength of the TMP.

"We're currently running MDP in Vancouver, then we are going to roll out the program in South America then Australia. "It's great that the TMP has been translated into so many languages. We can use the instrument in each local language."

#### 4. Project Management Academy

The Project Management Academy is a specific program to develop project management capability at Ausenco. Craig says, "Project management skills extend beyond the technical. Project teams need to perform effectively from day one, and this is where a shared language of teamwork is essential. The TMP helps Ausenco's project teams develop a concept of teamwork that helps balance the vital relationship between task requirements and personal work preferences."

#### Organisational change

Ausenco is currently going through significant change through growth and more recently the creation of regional teams instead of functional teams. With so much change happening, they realised the need to establish a process for people to follow that is simple, engaging and sustainable. According to Craig, "In a nutshell, our people strategy hinges on three elements: Leadership, Engagement, Performance. I believe it all starts with leadership. Leadership drives engagement which in turn drives performance. We all know that we work for a good leader. This formula is nice and simple and it's the way we talk in our business and educate our leaders."

"The concept of keeping things simple at Ausenco also applies to the choice of tool we use for team alignment and leadership development. There is no other Profile instrument used at Ausenco but the TMP because we know it works. It has proven to be an effective tool, at all levels of the organisation, across different functions and across different cultures."

"What's great about the TMP is that it is built around a model of work processes. It addresses what effective teams actually do, rather than what personalities make a good leader. This means the feedback from the Profile can easily be related back to real world operational issues."

Craig Robinson, Ausenco

