

NEW GAME-PLAN CASE STUDY

LESSONS LEARNED

This case study summarises how we designed, facilitated, analysed and reported a 'Lessons Learned' Brain-Pool Workshop, for a global biosciences company. The focus was on projects where unforeseen problems in formulating pesticides had led to serious costs and delays in manufacture, supply-chain distribution, and use.

Workshop Preparation

Prior to the Workshop, the participants were asked, from their experience, to articulate 'Symptom-Effect Statements', contexts for these, and areas of Project work which had gone 'well' or had been 'doubtful'. We provided thinking prompts and templates in each case. We distilled these contributions into a report setting out 'Generic Problem Statements'. This was circulated to the participants.

Developing 'Cause Statements'

In the Workshop, the participants validated the Generic Problem Statements and used them, in a staged process, to develop 'Cause Statements'. These included not only the obvious, 'immediate' causes, but also 'root' causes and contributory 'indirect' causes. Participants worked individually, then in groups, to compare ideas and develop rounded contributions. These were recorded, shared and commented upon by others using a wireless network of mini-laptops. Some 200 contributions were generated in this exercise. We distilled these to create 'Distilled Cause Statements', which were then reviewed and validated in a plenary session.

Identifying 'Good Practices'

'Good Practices' were then developed against each of the Distilled Cause Statements. Participants again worked individually, then in groups, to compare ideas, develop rounded contributions and share these for further 'builds'. Over 40 'Good Practices' were generated. These were used to stimulate discussion of 'blockers' and 'solutions'. Further rounds of discussion generated 'Distilled Good Practices'. These were then quantitatively assessed against four criteria: 'Business benefit', 'Ease of implementation', 'Breadth' and 'Relevance'.

Developing 'Action Plans'

Action Plans were then developed through a process of articulating, building and sharing ideas, supported by prompts and templates. Again, the wireless network gave everyone the chance to review and comment on plans developed by others. After the Workshop, we delivered a Verbatim Report which included all the outputs. Our Synthesis Report then analysed and developed the outputs further. The key output was a set of refined Good Practices together with the Action Plans needed to implement them.

Workshop feedback

The Workshop assessment showed that participants valued the 'different techniques to gather and review the output', the 'use of technology for rapid data entry and collation', and the production of 'immediate results'. The anonymity provided by the system was a 'nice effect' because it 'kept the stronger personalities from enforcing their will upon the group' and contributed to 'openness of inputs, no defensiveness'.

Participants also welcomed the ability to 'rapidly synthesize immensely complex inputs' and to summarise contributions 'overnight and between sessions to continuously develop work quickly through many layers'. They highlighted 'good preparation by participants and organizers'. The Workshop was 'very results-oriented'.

Further Information

New Game-Plan is a specialist company which catalyses strategic change for leading global companies, public bodies and cross-sector groups. Our approach is innovative and distinctive, fusing Knowledge, Facilitation Services, a Practical Toolkit, and Supporting Technology. Our expertise and experience is broad, across many sectors. We have particular strengths in research and innovation. For further information, contact Dr Ray Smith: Telephone: 01428 661517. E-mail: info@new-game-plan.co.uk. Web: www.new-game-plan.co.uk.

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