

## Increasing team satisfaction and employee retention



**SANDRA HOEYLAERTS,**  
GLOBAL TALENT  
AND ORGANISATION  
DEVELOPMENT,  
HUNTSMAN

Sandra Hoeylaerts, worked on finding out what skills and capabilities managers and leaders within Huntsman should be equipped with. She explains: "To close the gap between the different divisions, we needed this important information to build a programme that would help leaders to develop themselves irrespectively of the division they work in."

### Increasing team satisfaction and employee retention through well trained managers and leaders

#### Challenge

Huntsman pursues a growth strategy through mergers and acquisitions. Integrating the acquired firms into the company, brings diverse corporate cultures and ways of looking at leadership and management together. Different views also exist because every region or division can independently work and decide on training and development initiatives. From 2010-2011 Huntsman, adjusted its HR structure and implemented a global corporate structure. With the new global HR department, the organisation intended to create corporate programmes which would deploy the same content throughout the companies to establish a uniformity in management tools and language.

This would also help to make internal promotions – which are stimulated by Huntsman - easier. For the programme itself, HR had several focus points in mind. Leaders should obtain a broader range of leadership styles, act proactively, develop employees and feel comfortable with taking (hard) decisions. Huntsman also wanted them to become transformational leaders, inspiring others to be open for change, because the industry had also faced many changes in recent years.

#### Solution

Krauthammer was contacted because Huntsman Holland BV had already had a positive experience with Krauthammer. However, there was small doubt in their minds regarding whether to hire Krauthammer for the global programme. This was the trainers' directness. Huntsman found it suitable for Northern Europe, but less for Southern Europe, the Americas and Asia. A pilot training in Asia and in America was able to remove this doubt: "We invited the people to take part who we knew would not be shy about giving feedback to the trainer," says Hoeylaerts. Huntsman experienced that it was a success. The tools and concepts were picked up and could be used anywhere within the organisation and they appreciated the use of local trainers, so that the same message was transferred in every training, while respecting the local culture.

“We asked the employees questions about the changes they noticed. To what extent rules and procedures could be discussed with their manager? What their ability to delegate was and what the level of ownership they received was? What was the level of coaching they got when they weren’t able to execute a certain task on their own? How challenging were the objectives in case they were more experienced? We noticed that the focus had shifted from content management to people management. People start using the concept of the “inner positive attitude” by first looking at their own filter instead of just thinking that the other person is wrong,”

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“The approach is applicable everywhere. It is about providing clearness to the managers and developing a common language. We also appreciated the small bits of theory combined with the larger parts of exercises, like role play and subgroup working.”

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Finally, before signing the contract, Hoeylaerts was invited to Krauthammer University, where she was able to connect with other Krauthammer clients and share experiences.

Before manager and leaders joined the global Advanced Management programme (AMP), they went through a 360-analysis from the Hay Group. They received feedback about the climate they created within their team or department, the leadership styles they used and where they stood with regards to demonstrating critical leadership competencies

## Senior management programme worldwide

After this 360-analysis, the senior management followed a training programme by Krauthammer. It was a global Advanced Management programme (AMP) of 3 x 2 days.

Part of the programme dealt with topics like setting objectives, giving and receiving feedback, employee motivation, delegation, communicating a decision, saying “no” effectively and realignment. The training was spread over 6 months. After the training months, the managers worked for another 6 months, applying what they learned in their daily practice. After a year, the 360-analysis was repeated.

## Results

After taking the 360-survey for a second time after the AMP, Huntsman noticed that the atmosphere in the teams had improved.

Furthermore, HR saw a big change in turnover. The departments and teams where managers followed the training have a higher retention rate. Over a period of 5 years, it has been observed that the retention rate is 30% lower in departments where the training hasn’t started yet. People become more engaged as the basic elements of a good work atmosphere are created through giving feedback and praise. On average, the employee turnover in international companies within the chemical industry is 8%. Huntsman is now measuring 7.5%.

HR notices also a positive attitude towards the programme. Managers are advertising the programme within the company.

“You can see that the programme really gets a push, when people talk positively about it. It makes other managers ask when it’s their turn?”

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Huntsman is interested in knowing whether the positive impact still remains after 2 years so they keep using the 360-surveys for feedback. So far, 185 people have been trained.

In addition to the positive impact, Huntsman have also drawn another important conclusion from the 360-analysis. There was still only 1 or 2 management styles being highly used. Therefore, the main challenge was now to go beyond these tools and give managers and leaders insight into how to apply situational leadership, grow style versatility and mix styles.

### **Follow-up programme for different leadership styles**

In response, Krauthammer created a 2-day AMP follow-up programme focusing on style versatility (using the right leadership style in various situations to improve the climate). The content is based on different stages in the learning process: creating awareness, deep understanding of effects of leadership styles on climate, training on pure styles, neuro communication, training on complex cases for style versatility.

The programme translates the theory into personal cases, on which participants work during the training. In-between training days, they get a coaching session with 5 or 6 other participants. The first five groups have already started and are being trained in English, German, Dutch, Hindi and Mandarin.

### **About Huntsman**

Founded in 1970, Huntsman is a global manufacturer and marketer of differentiated chemicals, originally known for pioneering innovations in packaging and later, for rapid and integrated growth in petrochemicals. Through a series of strategic acquisitions, joint ventures and internal expansions, Huntsman's operating companies today produce 33 billion pounds of products for a variety of global industries, including chemicals, plastics, automotive, aviation, footwear, paints and coatings, construction, technology, agriculture, healthcare, textiles, detergents, personal care, furniture, appliances, and packaging. Huntsman has approximately 15.000 employees and operates from multiple locations worldwide. In 2015, the organisation had revenues of over \$10 billion.

### **About Krauthammer**

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