

CLIENT CASE

# Building a new management team to drive cultural and strategic change



'Why didn't we do this sooner?'

'This approach allowed us to build our management team, to come together and develop the team spirit of listening and sharing. The work in the field should now allow us to apply what we have learned.'

The definition of the word 'team' (Larousse dictionary): a group of athletes who jointly engage in a competition. The 'High-Performance Team' plan allowed us to step up our individual games, develop our team spirit and focus on our common goal: the performance of VIVESCIA Agriculture'

## Building a new management team that is united and can effectively drive cultural and strategic change within an agricultural cooperative group

### Challenge

VIVESCIA Agriculture was created in 2012 through the merger of a number of companies. Although the idea of the strategic alignment soon became a reality, the day-to-day experience of the teams, many of which had been reassembled with members from different organisations with different cultures, proved to be more delicate.

In 2015, VIV'AVENIR was launched, a 5-year strategic plan. In order to support its implementation by involving all of the managers, whilst contending with a tense social climate, the Executive Committee decided to create a 'Management Plan'. In launching this global programme, the committee became aware of the need to start with a thorough review of its own functioning as a team.

At the outset, the Executive Committee was a group of experts focused on their own units, who would share information at meetings, without generating synergies or speaking with one voice, in a context in which major changes needed to be managed. The goal was to build a mature and responsible management team: clear about the fundamentals, and effectively able to meet the challenges posed by changes in the agricultural activities of VIVESCIA, by involving and supporting the management chain in the implementation of the decisions taken.

### Solution

After discussing the context of the agricultural activities of VIVESCIA and the challenges facing the team with Christophe Brasset (CEO) and Carole Waibel (Head of HR), a meeting with the Executive Committee was set up in order to share the issues and confirm the group's motivation to fully commit to the 'High-Performance Team' programme.

This was followed by an intense phase of preparation. Individual interviews, online questionnaires, and 'on-site' observation of a meeting allowed to form a good sense of the starting point for the team, to clarify their ambitions and develop an initial programme.

This was built up around four day-and-a-half residential sessions, spread over the course of eight months. Extensive follow-up work was done

'A coach consultant with good listening skills and a remarkable insight; humble, down-to-earth, approachable, yet only visible when needed, and conveying highly enriching human values.'

between sessions. The deliverables were reworked and challenged in sessions until consensus was reached.

The key practices, tools and behaviours that characterise the most effective and engaged teams were discussed. As a key factor in guaranteeing full adoption, operational and customised 'deliverables' were established by the participants, with the help of the tools supplied by Krauthammer.

## Results

The Executive Committee created the framework for a completely new team dynamic, with clarity about its purpose, code of conduct, most appropriate leadership style, corporate governance, roles & responsibilities and the content-dynamic cycles of its meetings.

The team practised various methods for making decisions, as well as each member's capacity to request and receive feedback, and the team's ability to communicate with one voice. They discovered the value and practicality of an approach aimed at generating and managing healthy tensions.

The initial working group evolved into a true management team, with each member acting as a stakeholder in the collective, and no longer merely a representative of a function or a unit.

The key commitments were shared during newly created manager forums, facilitated according to a collaborative 'world café' approach. Decisions about the functioning of VIVESCIA Agriculture were taken in extension of the work that was accomplished.

Finally, regular and annual monitoring indicators (e.g.: a survey for the entire company intended to assess the exemplary function and performance of the team in terms of its 7 core responsibilities) were created in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the action.

## About VIVESCIA Agriculture

Based in Northeastern France, VIVESCIA Agriculture encompasses agricultural activities carried out by the cooperative, two businesses, a company for the distribution of agricultural equipment and a transport company, related to agricultural production and the distribution of materials for wine products.

Positioned upstream in the food production chain, VIVESCIA Agriculture is responsible for providing the essential link between farmers, customers and end consumers.

Vision: To be the leading French cooperative group for sustainable agriculture and to guarantee the best value for the output of our 11,000 affiliated farmers.

## About Krauthammer

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