

SUCCESS STORY

SOCIAL STYLE Supports Merger Success in Energy Industry

INDUSTRY:

Oil and Gas

CHALLENGE:

"While our merger and acquisition activity is driven by a strategy to grow our oil and gas reserves, we recognize that people ultimately make a merger successful."

MANAGER OF PERFORMANCE
IMPROVEMENT, U.S.-based
independent oil and gas producer

SOLUTION:

SOCIAL STYLE

THE CHALLENGE

Mergers and acquisitions offer the opportunity to accelerate an organization's growth, expand product and service offerings and enter new markets. They also are an opportunity for financial disaster and public embarrassment.

For every merger success there are high-profile failures such as AOL/Time Warner and Chrysler/Daimler. In fact, a Training Magazine article says that 55 to 70 percent of mergers fail to meet the anticipated purpose. It's further estimated that one in three mergers fails for cultural reasons.

A major, independent energy company offers a lesson in how mergers can succeed and the importance of paying attention to cultural issues throughout the merger process. Founded in the 1970s, the company is now one of the largest U.S.-based independent oil and gas producer and one of the largest independent processors of natural gas and natural gas liquids in North America. A significant part of that growth has come via mergers and acquisitions, with the company often completing at least one acquisition per year. The company now employs more than 5,000 people.

THE SOLUTION

The TRACOM Group's products are an important part of the company's performance and culture efforts. They have used TRACOM's SOCIAL STYLE (Producing Results with Others) and team development (Orchestrating Team Performance) courses as part of the company's leadership development process and to support the merger strategy.

A leadership development program was created to address the critical skills that were affecting executives and supervisors on a daily basis. They wanted to create common competencies throughout the organization.

"Interpersonal skills are a critical skill for effective managers and a prerequisite for success," said the executive. "SOCIAL STYLE directly addresses the issues and struggles that managers face every day."

They found that providing SOCIAL STYLE training has helped build a common culture and a context for dealing with business issues. People are able to separate interpersonal issues or differences from the fundamental business issues.

The company also uses TRACOM's Orchestrating Team Performance course to improve workgroup productivity encouraging individual contributors to work collaboratively. "We had a group of brilliant individuals working on a high-impact project that was initially struggling. People were giving good effort, but without good results. There was limited feedback and collaboration. TRACOM's Teams training and 360-degree feedback tools helped to get the project back on track."

The executive says development efforts support the company's growth success. "Managers have told me that Style has made their jobs easier and made them more effective in producing their results. As a training manager, it doesn't get much better than that."

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WHY SOCIAL STYLE?

TRACOM's SOCIAL STYLE Model was originally created through a partnership between education and business. University of Denver industrial psychologist, David Merrill was approached by industry to identify what attributes distinguished top-performing executives from the others. That research turned into the SOCIAL STYLE Model which shows there are four basic patterns of behavior, known as the four SOCIAL STYLES. Once a person understands these behavioral patterns, they can modify their actions to build more effective relationships with others and be more successful in any profession. This is known as Versatility. Research shows that managers with higher Versatility are:



27% better at leading teams



19% more likely to be promoted



25% better at coaching others



23% better at effectively managing conflict

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