

"WINNING OUR CUSTOMERS' HEARTS AND MINDS"

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A Process for Sustained Improvement of Service Quality and Leadership Performance at T-Mobile Austria Shops.

And a Model Example of Whole Scale™ Change.

In January 2006, Klaus Slamanig, the head of Shop Organization at TMA, asked us what could be done in order to establish T-Mobile shops as examples of Austrian best practice in service quality. It was a project that sounded very exciting before it even started. Not just because we saw the sparkle in his eyes.

During our first meeting with him, it soon became clear where the journey was headed. We proposed a process that would, from day one, involve all relevant parts of the organization. Furthermore, the process would include reflection on the principles of successful customer orientation. It was safe for us to assume that the client was very well aware of the benefits this approach would bring about. Since he did, he displayed confidence and determination, which is a crucial factor for a project's success. That got us off on a very good start because in processes like these, leaders need to convey a "sense of urgency" and set an example to follow. At the same time, leaders must engage the entire organization in such a way that members will support the process and, eventually, commit to it.

Further basic assumptions regarding this process included the following:

- Service and customer orientation can only develop if...
 - it is clear that executives can set an example to follow and that they, as leaders, strongly encourage employees to focus on customer orientation;
 - all processes and structures are oriented towards this goal;
 - all internal interfaces support the goal.
- Leadership and communication play a decisive role in reaching the goals of this process.
- Intermediate superiors (called "section managers" at TMA) play an important role because they are the main hubs in processes like the one at hand. It makes sense to rely on existing executive hierarchies throughout the entire process and strengthening them while doing so.

Process Goals:

- Enhance service orientation in the shops (processing times, customer system speed, decrease customer loss, etc.)
- Improve leadership in terms of guidance
- Increase personal responsibility and, as a consequence, accelerate response times and increase innovative solutions found on site.

The Process:

Time period 2006	Steps	Persons involved	Goals
January	Job assignment & specification of goals	Head of Shop Organization	Determine goals and outline process Nominate teams
March to May	2 workshops with the core team	8 executives	Define goals Detailed process planning
April to May	2 workshops with development team	Executives and employees from all areas of Shop Organization	Plan data compilation and collect data ...and prepare it for the conference presentations
June	Leadership conference I Duration: 2 days	70 executives, development team	Develop a collective vision Plan implementation
July	Core team III	See above	Evaluate conference Prepare conference II
September	Leadership conference II Duration: 1 day	70 executives, development team	Point out "quick wins" and discuss them Discussion about leadership concepts
November	Core team IV	See above	Reflect on the process and prepare next steps

Our role as consultants:

We developed the road map for the process and the scripts for every step of the process, obtaining the most important input from the teams involved. We also assisted in creating presentations and in preparing for these presentations, provided feedback and gave input about leadership and customer orientation during workshops and conferences.

What is Whole Scale™ Change in this context?

When working with Whole Scale™ Change, the focus lies on specific groups (so-called "microcosms") within an organization, relying on the assumption that these groups represent an organization's DNA ("culture as something an organization lives and breathes on an everyday basis and is therefore difficult to reflect upon") to the best possible extent and that these groups will spread the concept of change within the organization.

Whole Scale™ Change processes include work both in small and large units. One key factor is the makeup of these units. One of the essential design principles of this process is the constant alternation between large and small units. Paul Tolchinsky, one of the pioneers in this field, described this as an organization's "converging/diverging".

We followed the Whole Scale™ Change principles very closely and opted to primarily rely on internal resources (and, consequently, the organization's DNA). We built different microcosms (client, change and development teams) where the detailed work was done. At the leadership conferences, which were the largest microcosm, we proceeded to

engage the entire organization in a discourse. At those conferences, a large amount of energy was set free, which enabled the organization to tackle this highly ambitious endeavor. This energy is exactly what makes participants be passionate about processes like the one at hand. That feeling arises in connection with the simultaneous work on collective visions ("bringing the whole system into one room"), which sets free huge amounts of energy.

This might be the biggest opportunity for achieving successful change.

Feedback provided by the client, Klaus Slamanig:

"This project was a very exciting one right from the start because it was something totally new for everybody at TMA and it marked a new beginning for our shop organization. I certainly had some doubts if this project would get off the ground, but after the first two workshops, I was positive that our baby called "winning our customers' hearts and minds" would see the light of day. The entire project, including the procedures and the involvement of participants, developed a dynamics of its own as we dug deeper into the process.

TRAIN consultants Lothar Wenzl and Thomas Schöller, both highly qualified experts, provided valuable assistance from the very start. They showed us how we could reach our vision of the future and created a wonderful process that would allow us to do just that. They created concepts for our workshops and conferences and supported us during those events. And they helped us stay on track, which gave us all a lot of confidence.

All persons involved in the process were remarkably dedicated and contributed an incredible amount of ideas to keep the project going. From one workshop to the next, we successfully tested activities that would enable us to win our customers' hearts and minds. After this first year in our project, I am very proud to say that we have already gotten very far.

We will certainly continue our cooperation with TRAIN. There are still some steps to take in order to make our customers 'feel' even more distinctly the pronounced service orientation at T-Mobile."