

LANDING A BENCHMARK CHANGE INITIATIVE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the deployment of a business model transformation programme in the Sub-Saharan African office of a leading FMCG company. The implementation was quickly recognised as a benchmark within the multinational organization and was hailed as the ‘most seamless roll-out of new processes and technology ever recorded in the history of the business model transformation programme.’

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A multinational company planned to execute a global transformation programme, which would optimize the way they would work as a business. With their rich history and product portfolio, one might ask, why did they need to change? They were already a successful organisation delivering great results. However, there were 5 key influences driving the need for a change in the way they worked as a business:

1. The company was set up across diverse nationalities and cultures. Naturally, every business had their own way of doing things. They were not joined up across businesses, functions or regions. They therefore could not operate across geographic boundaries, leverage their global scale or be agile and cost-effective.
2. The environment was changing quickly around them and they needed to respond quicker and be more agile. They needed to respond to market dynamics and consumer needs faster than they could in 2008.

3. They had revised their global strategy and they needed to ensure that they were operating in the best way to flawlessly execute this strategy.
4. In the Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe (AMEE) Region, they had set ambitious targets to achieve by 2013. They needed to have their systems and processes working to support them, so they could focus on what mattered most.
5. Their competitors and other blue chip companies had undergone their own transformation about a decade ago – hence they were in a better position to compete in a changing and more competitive environment.

It was clear – they could not continue to do the same things they did previously expecting a different result. If they hoped to be better prepared for the future, they needed a different way of working.

WHAT WAS THEIR AMBITION?

The plan was to execute a business model transformation programme which would optimize the way they would work as a business . They chose an Enterprise Resource Planning system that would help them join up these processes and their information globally. Simply put – the programme would enable a consistent way of working across geographies supported by one system. It would also ensure they are more joined up globally, regionally and functionally.

Top-line the programme would

- change the way they set direction and plan as a single entity
- drive better integration between key functions like Sales and Supply Chain

- enable them to leverage expertise in the business. For example – setting up Service Centres capable of supporting across geographies, which would mean the business could focus on using the reports to drive insight and decisions instead of expending energy manually adjusting figures in reports and debating which figures are correct.
- establish a foundation, where their processes, information and systems support them to focus on driving growth in the business

This was their ambition with the programme.

The programme would bring quite a few changes to the way they worked. It would also be rolled out in a methodical way – to ensure they reached their target of going live in 20+ markets in 18 – 24 months by 2013.

The programme went through various stages with key activities conducted within each stage.

1. Starting Up: In this stage, they mobilised the team that would drive the change in the functions. A team was chosen from within the business – people who knew their functions and knew the Region. In this stage, they focused on understanding the approach for Sub-Saharan Africa. They also selected a team of change agents called Super Users who would land the changes in their respective departments.
2. Preparation: In this stage, they focused on understanding top-line what the key changes may be for Sub-Saharan Africa. They knew what the future operating model needed to be, so here they focused on understanding where the business was and what might need to change.

3. **Blueprint:** During this stage, they understood in more detail where the big changes were in the business and what solutions they could find to bridge the gaps that might exist.
4. **Realisation:** During this stage, the system was built to the market specifications and tested to ensure it worked.
5. **Final Preparation:** During final preparation, once the system was complete – end users were then trained on how the system worked and on the new processes implemented.
6. **Go Live:** On April 2013, the system went live in Sub-Saharan Africa. The new ways of working finally kicked in.

WHAT WAS THEIR CHANGE FRAMEWORK?

There were 4 key focus areas for their change framework:

- *Developing a Case for Change and New Direction:* This ensured that a clear case and direction for change was articulated and the vision was understood by all. People at all levels were committed to the change and the role they can play
- *Leadership and Sponsorship:* This ensured that leaders and change agents were aligned and prepared. Also that they provided direction, showed visible commitment, built energy, engaged with stakeholders and role-modelled desired behaviours
- *Stakeholder Communication & Engagement:* This ensured that buy-in and commitment were achieved with critical stakeholders (those most affected by the change and who had the potential to facilitate or derail it), via effective communication and engagement
- *Learning and Capability Development:* Knowledge and skills were upgraded to meet the expectations of the end game and behaviour change was embedded. Learnings were captured and shared and change capabilities were enhanced.

SO HOW DID THEY DO?

The Sub-Saharan African team worked tirelessly and passionately over 18 - 24 months to build the solution and get the business ready to use the system. Their tenacity, "can do" attitude, cross-functional engagement, learnings from similar deployments, teamwork and collaboration held them in good stead and their results testified to their commitment – they experienced the most seamless cutover ever recorded in the history of the business model transformation.

So what did Sub-Saharan Africa do differently in managing change? During the lifecycle of the Programme, there were several Change and Communications Products delivered to ensure the high standard of deployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. This section will outline how this Framework was applied in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Case for Change & New Direction: Several interventions were introduced to ensure all employees understood the need for change and that a new direction had been established. Some are outlined below:

- Consistent engagement with the Sub-Saharan Africa Senior Management Team (SMT):
They understood and bought-in to the case for change and the potential benefits the project could deliver. They knew it was a Must Do for the business and therefore were committed to drive for a new direction across geographies.
- For all employees in Sub-Saharan Africa, several communication channels were identified and implemented to ensure the key messages on the case for change were communicated. These include:
 - Road-show activities
 - Animations and videos during the Super User inductions

- Communication cycles with key messages across the various stages of the project

Leadership & Sponsorship: The success of the business model transformation programme relied on the buy-in and belief by the Leadership within an organisation that the change was necessary and would benefit the company in the long term.

- The Sub-Saharan SMT was engaged through the Project Senior Leadership Meetings. This ensured they were updated on key deliverables, issues and risks and could make informed decisions about the Programme deployment in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Besides the Leadership Engagement activities covered under Case for Change above, some interventions were identified and implemented to ensure the SMT conveyed support for the Programme. These include:
 - Email notes from the Managing Director to mark the end of each stage and the beginning of the next.
 - Go-Live Preparation Tips from members of the SMT

In these ways, the SMT, Functional Leadership Teams and line managers played an important role in ensuring the business was ready for Go-Live.

Stakeholder Communication & Engagement: Communications and Engagement with affected stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa was a key component of facilitating the change required for the project. Employees needed to be aware of, understand and buy into the rationale for the changes, before they would change their behaviour or take action. Below follows the stakeholder mapping, communication triggers and key channels:

- Eight key groups of stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa were communicated with and engaged. The overarching objective was to ensure that all stakeholders had the right level of information, at the right time, through the channels.

➤ Communications took the form of:

- Progress Updates
- Celebration of Milestones
- Lessons Learned
- People features and experiences
- Motivational pieces
- Targeted engagement to support the OD and role mapping activities
- Tailored engagement to foster understanding & prepare Sub-Saharan Africa for User Acceptance Testing, Transition, Training and Go-Live

FIGURE 1: COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK



➤ Outlined below are some of the key channels used for Communications and Engagement:

Channels

Channel	Summary
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1. Message of the Day	Short message which displayed on computer screens when people log in
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Channel	Summary
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2. Screen savers	A pictorial representation of the project stakeholders which reinforces the collaborative aspect of the project
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Channel	Summary
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3. Intranet community	Used to communicate organisation-wide messages and learnings about the project
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Channel	Summary
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4. Plasma screen	Used to communicate organisation-wide messages about the project during the communications campaign, UAT, Transition, Training, Go-Live and beyond
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Channel	Summary
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5. Email	Used to communicate messages about the project to the wider Organisation
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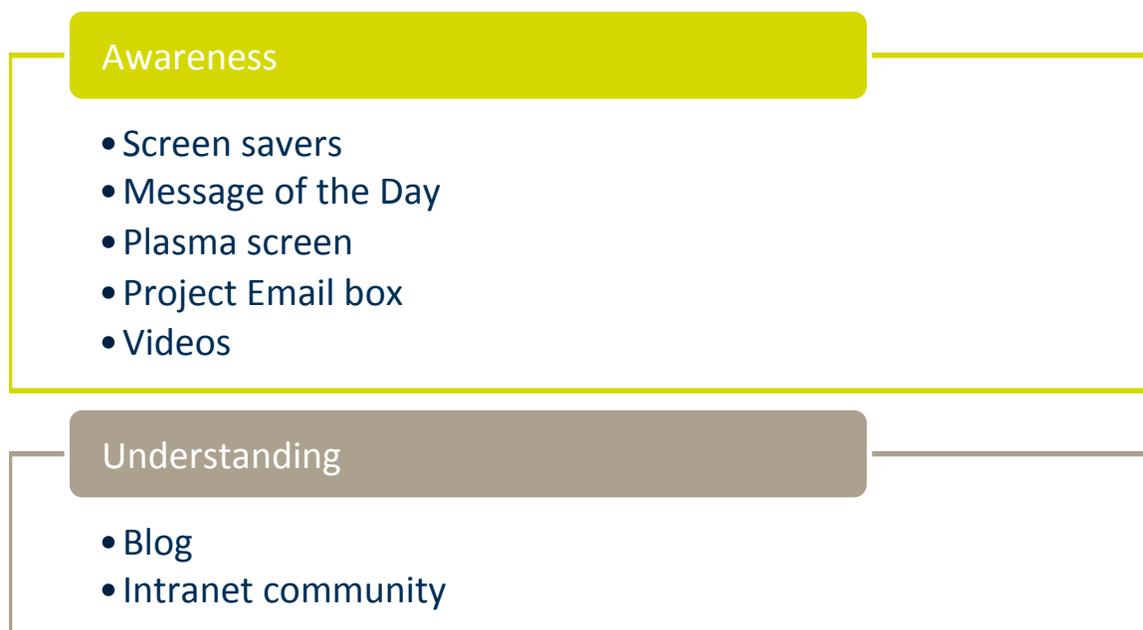
Channel	Summary
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6. Videos	Used to capture interviews with leadership, highlights of project events (e.g. UAT) etc.
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Channel	Summary
7. Blog	An information platform on the Intranet site regularly updated with news about the project. The blog was featured regularly on the Interact home page and interested people could subscribe to keep track of news.

The outcomes expected from each of the channels are summarized below:

FIGURE 2: COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES



Learning & Capability Development: The business transformation would have failed if employees were not equipped with the right capabilities and learning opportunities to embed the

new ways of working. It was crucial that the right people were provided with the skills and capabilities through a suitable platform.

- To ensure they had the right people to support the new ways of working, the organisational design needed to be reviewed and plans put in place to transition to the new structures in time for Go Live. This process was managed as part of Business As Usual, through the Human Resources line.
- Another key activity was ensuring the right roles are mapped with the access in the system. This activity was called Role to Position Mapping (RtPM).
- The Training Cycle included these key activities:

FIGURE 3: TRAINING CYCLE



Below are the key principles associated with the Training Approach:

- A Train-the-Trainer (TTT) approach was adopted
- Training was relevant (role based) and delivered to end users at an appropriate level

- Training was ‘just in time’ i.e. fresh for end user go live, and ‘just enough’
- Stakeholders within Sub-Saharan Africa were actively involved and engaged in the training scheduling and delivery processes to promote buy-in and ownership
- A Super User Network served as a forum where Super Users could discuss issues and share information/learning

The Detailed Change Impact Assessment (Detailed CIA) also provided an input into what type of training would be required for employees. A Detailed Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was also developed. The analysis aided the understanding of the training needs of Sub-Saharan Africa to meet the capability requirements of project adoption. The TNA was used to develop the Training schedule.

Training was planned to last for 2 months – from January – March 2013 – with mop-up sessions scheduled for the period following Go-Live.

- Super Users were critical in driving the adoption and sustainability of the new ways of working. 20 Super Users were identified per process area.

Various channels were utilized to enhance the capacity of Super Users and empower them to function optimally in their new role. They include:

- Creation of self-study and Learning Groups. These Learning Groups were expected to meet as agreed by the Learning Group lead.
- Trainer preparation Knowledge Transfer sessions
- Process walkthroughs

- Training on how to execute testing activities
- Circulation of prep materials
- Soft-skills training
- Establishment of a Super User Network
- Regular Knowledge Checkpoint surveys to test their knowledge and ensure a minimal standard of understanding and knowledge acquisition

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

After Go Live – as they embed the New Ways of Working (NWOW) in the business, 5 key business outcomes will start to materialise.

- They will have data they can trust (provided they had accurate data that migrated into the system – data integrity is crucial)
- They will have better business insights – with everyone working from the same ‘truth’, this should enable better planning and decision making
- They will have better delivery mechanisms – having visibility of and managing their production process will enable them to focus on delivering quality products and innovations
- They can deliver products on time and in full because they’ll be managing their supply chain and inventory more holistically
- They can focus their investments with the trade driving their sales

These outcomes will rely on the business owning and implementing the NWOW, which is a key consequence of good change management.

SUMMARY

The chapter explores the background and objectives of the programme. It describes the change framework implemented, illustrated with examples which show the change framework in action. It then concludes with a summary of the benefits to be expected from the successful implementation of change at the FMCG company.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What factors led to the decision to embark upon the business model transformation programme?
2. What were the key phases and activities of the transformation programme?
3. What were the 4 key elements of their change framework?
4. Illustrate (with examples) how these 4 elements were put in action.
5. What key business outcomes are expected from the change?