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Pierre,

JPB's Mental Merger process is one I had encountered previously and successfully whilst in another Thales division and as part of a remedial action. I decided to repeat this experience but as a risk-mitigation project during an organisational change for our new business line.

At first, this decision was greeted with scepticism by some of my French-British management team (*waste of time and money*), as most key players had already been working together for years.

The main focus of this Mental Merger process was to ensure that no barriers to communication or understanding existed within the team as we redefined fundamental strategic issues. These could have serious repercussions on the general atmosphere of cooperation within various units.

JPB started by conducting a perception gathering. The restitution of the output (*Cooperation barometers, a number of "emotional viruses" and "mine fields"*) created an awareness of main human risks and opportunities; in addition it allowed people to reflect on the type of appropriate measures needed along with the consequences of these for each site. Three months after this first stage, two common workshops for the extended management board aimed at optimising understanding and acceptance of respective perceptions, reactions and needs, as well as introducing "storm resistance" procedures. Two months later, JPB helped us to merge the operational and strategic outcome of both sessions into a draft action plan.

The results can be summarised as follows:

Much more than a typical one-off teambuilding session, the Mental Merger process dismantled many misperceptions, even between colleagues of the same culture. It changed views and provided holistic tools and common codes authenticating the other's behaviours, and as a result, acceptance of colleagues.

Most of us didn't expect to discover so much, for we were convinced we knew our colleagues well after more than 10 years of cooperation.

We were able to set up, in record time, an operational draft action plan after dealing with *soft* facts and addressing our *emotional viruses*. JPB ensured that the result was pragmatic, concrete and committed to by the top 25 of our organisation.

Most of our managers were surprised how far beyond their expectations this trans-cultural project addressed personal and cultural aspects of concrete business issues. Important strategic topics were treated in depth. It also helped me to reconsider some road map priorities.

If you consider the conflicts of interest among team members, the workshop framework revealed an unexpected and surprising feature: it clearly empowered participants to talk freely without fearing the consequences.

The Mental Merger process provided a real contribution that is to say: the buy-in, i.e. commitment to our new organisation.

Every participant was convinced that, despite the constraints of time, the Mental Merger process represented a huge time-saver in the implementation of our new cross-boarder organisation.

With best regards



Chris Gane