



Name and Role

Michael McCaul is the Operations Manager for JMG Systems Ltd

Key Fact

JMG have seen significant bottom line improvement in sales and profit margins as a result developing their management team and providing the opportunity to use new skills to drive business performance.

Organisation

JMG Systems Ltd. is an Electrical Manufacturing & Services company which employees 65 staff. This is a family run business created in 1976, which prides itself on key family members expanding and growing the company, with little or no formal training. The company provides both product and process solutions mainly in the Quarry and Recycling OEM market worldwide. Employee numbers almost doubled in 2004 with steady growth ever since, and the customer base continues to grow with JMG Systems Ltd.

Management Development

Primarily JMG Systems Ltd is a young workforce, with many of the staff having limited or no formal qualifications. Michael on the other hand had the benefit of significant development and experience within Nortel before joining the family business. Bringing this knowledge and experience enabled the other family members to appreciate the positive impact that training and development can have on performance and business improvement. As a result the company decided to promote an internal training and development activity with current management, and future potential supervisors to raise the operational aspects of the company. Michael says *"Key disciplines and skills needed to be put into place to deal with the fact our company is no longer solely Northern Ireland based, but global. We have found that a much more professional approach to our customers, the market, and our business in general was required in order to meet our goal and continue the level of growth already experienced, but also to expand our global market share and presence over the next 5 years."*

Before M&L Development – Triggers

Having much of the staff out of formal education for a number of years, the senior management embarked on a journey to provide key skills in a practical and professional way. It was therefore important to make any learning experience enjoyable, interesting, and very interactive - not simply 'presentation' based or 'reading'.

Management & Leadership Development Activity

In partnership with PCM Associates, the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) framework was used to look at priority elements of the business

- Communication and business presentations skills
- Customer relations

- Managing time and priorities,
- influencing skills and motivation
- team organization,
- Performance improvement

“JMG decided to put their management staff through ILM Level 5, and other areas of work force through ILM Levels 2 and 3 at the same time. By doing this all employees were able to compare with each other what was being taught and apply new skills immediately in to the business - which then resulted in faster returns and improvements”

Almost 40% of the staff have completed minimum Level 2 - with many of this years' cohorts moving up to the next level in 2008

“It is easy to ‘be too busy’ especially when we have very demanding customers.”

Actions, Outcomes and Benefits

The most beneficial aspect from each of the courses was that a cross section of staff was involved in each session, and this helped to generate more debate and ideas from each of the sessions. The most challenging, but yet most rewarding was having the diversity in each group working together on the different projects. The key point is making sure that this type of training continues.

The outcomes and benefits were mostly noticed in the staff's morale, and self confidence. Now JMG have a proactive team continuously looking at improvements at all levels. Management now feels less pressure, and feels more comfortable delegating tasks rather than doing it all themselves.

“No matter how technically superior a product can be, it relies on people to put it all together, and this would not be possible unless we provided our people with the key skills needed”

Leadership Style

Michael's philosophy to leadership is to consistently challenge the status quo and to empower people to strive towards the impossible. He has always been keen to learn and develop my leadership skills through courses such as Seven Habits, Positive Influence, ILM or Corporate Leadership, or just working alongside and listening to positive people, customers & colleagues. His view is that a good leader never has all the answers and can always learn new skills as you go.

Barriers to Improving Management Skills

Traditionally JMG was a fairly typical business where the ethos was to work hard and produce the goods. Having recognized that there was greater potential in the business the priority was to create a workplace with a new culture of innovation and ideas generation at the heart of the business. Helping the staff realize that there will always be able to make some levels of improvement and that they could contribute to making change was not easy but became rewarding for all involved. Michael states *‘The only barrier to improving as a manager is having the (dangerous) mindset to think that there is nothing else to be learnt... I have found that no matter what industry or business you operate or what people you work with, things always change – coping with that change is the real challenge’*