

Building a high performing team and business at Cedar Software

"We had to get down to the specifics of our vision, and how we each were going to contribute."

CHRIS PENNINGTON, MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Challenge

As part of a global expansion strategy, Cedar Software acquired an IT services business that was experiencing decelerating growth within Australia/New Zealand.

A new Managing Director was appointed for the region to lead, integrate and take to market the combined business, and moreover, turnaround the decline in growth.

To build a successful business, the Managing Director knew it was crucial to re-define their direction and for his team to get back on track and 'rejuvenate.' The priority was to:

- Become a cohesive, motivated, high performing team
- Define the vision, direction and go-to-market approach as the 'new' company
- Decide how we will work as a team to build and run the business
- Determine how to turn-around performance – to meet targets for the current year as well as make the longer term strategic changes

Solution

In close partnership with the Managing Director, Roundtable developed a rapid and effective approach to move the business forward. The cornerstone was a comprehensive strategic framework, which enabled the team to understand

the realities of their new business, make intelligent strategic decisions, and work as a team to execute.

In response to the culture of the organisation and to promote the strong engagement that would be important for implementation, we involved the entire company.

Our assistance began with quickly assessing the state of the organisation and the go-to-market opportunity. With our guidance, the team built upon this to articulate a clear vision and direction, establish strategic objectives and set specific actions that engaged everyone.

The project culminated in a 3 day company offsite. A group facilitation approach was vital to bring the team, which normally worked in a distributed, project fashion, together 'as a team' to explore ideas, surface the "real" issues and achieve consensus.

Team-working skills and behaviours were a focus for how we facilitated discussions, and this was enhanced by experiential group activities. This aspect was designed to also reinforce Cedar's values and culture of customer focus.

To support the implementation and execution, and further reinforce team effectiveness, we coached the Management Team in a subsequent review meeting and helped them develop an on-going governance process.

Results

A comprehensive vision and plan was developed that was embraced and endorsed by everyone in the group, and seen as a true collective effort.

This plan did not 'sit on a shelf' once completed – it specified actions, accountabilities and timeframes for business improvement. Furthermore, it was actively used as their management framework to review business performance and track progress of longer-term change.

Through our emphasis on knowledge transfer throughout the project, the teamwork of the Management Team improved as they worked toward the priorities they agreed with the broader group.

Dramatic improvements to business performance ensued within several quarters. The team not only turned-around an unprofitable position, but returned the business to growth.

"You played a vital role in helping me to focus my attention and the attention of my Management Team on a new strategic direction... (You) provided us with the structure and guidance to confront the important business issues and develop a shared understanding of how best to move our business forward rapidly."

About Roundtable Consulting

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