

"I try to do things differently now... most importantly I do NOT take myself so seriously - this has really liberated me and allows me to ask questions and make suggestions to anybody and about anything which I may not have asked or suggested before."

Sylvia Laible

We live in times of change – people and organisations are under constant pressure to deliver more and better with less. As well as focussing on improving efficiency, quality and customer service, Companies like Heinz need to look at internal assets, like leadership, employee engagement and team work: are these up to the challenges of today's marketplace?

The culture of a Company - the way people treat each other and work together towards common goals - becomes more and more a measure of a Company's success.

So what is the culture like at Heinz? And what do we want it to be like?

In May 2003, the UK Sales department embarked on a 'cultural development programme', called "Pursuit of Excellence", as a result of a research across all Sales employees, that had highlighted the existence of task-driven behaviours, negative attitudes when under pressure, few "thank you's", and a reduced level of motivation, morale and collaboration.

Ray Cornwall – Sales Training & Development Manager – took the lead in this exciting journey to develop stronger leadership, management and communication skills at every level, to emphasise the point that change starts with the individual and that "you don't have to be the boss to be a leader".

Based on leadership development theories, best practice in communication skills and Martial Arts, the courses include both indoor and outdoor, individual and team challenges. The



"It's made me look at my job and life differently. I am a lot more positive, happier and now realise that I am very fortunate in many ways. I HAVE CHOSEN MY ATTITUDE! I am a lot more proactive. I have learnt that no task is impossible: I just get on with it and succeed!"

Mark Pallant

delegates physically experienced Leadership, Management, Motivation and Teamwork through exercises, such as climbing up a 9 metre telegraph pole and a 15 metre high wall. These activities are meant to push people outside of their comfort zones to experience increased choices of behaviour, develop self-awareness, confidence, motivation and teamwork. The learning, however, was not whether or not you succeed, but what you can do when you put your mind to it,

showing how many other limiting beliefs may stop you from achieving your full potential in life.

But why invest Company's money in such a training programme? Because a robust culture and motivated employees are the driving forces of higher performing businesses!

The programme turned out to be a success with the Sales team and led to excellent improvements in individual and team attitudes, beliefs and motivation, strong employee retention and many internal promotions. In 2003 and 2004 it 'radiated outwards' and was extended to other UK functions. As of today "Most of our Marketing colleagues and colleagues from virtually every function within Heinz UK have been on the course, including our UK & Ireland Executive team!" Ray confirms enthusiastically.

A lot has been achieved, but culture change needs continuity and consistency to make a difference, for the individual and the business. At the end of the day, as Aristotle said *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit"*.

A Story About Culture

