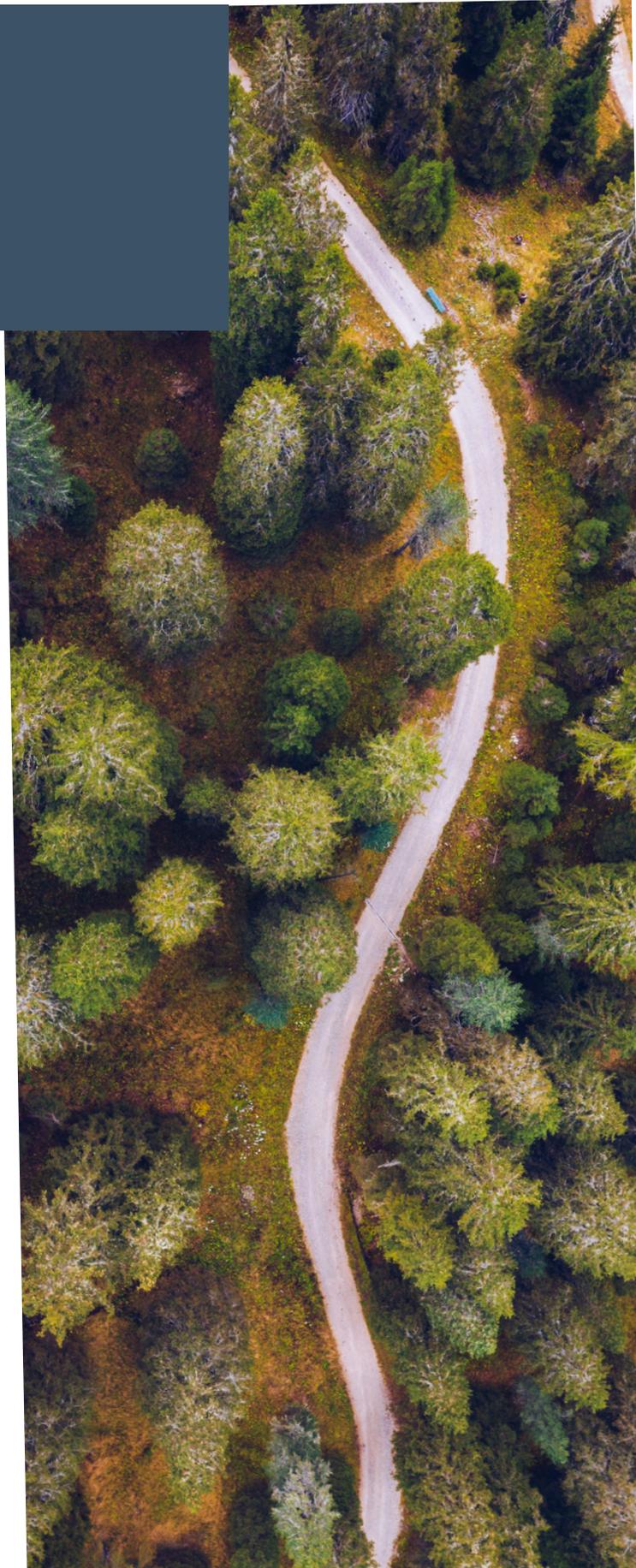


CASE STUDY PREPARING A NEW ORGANISATION

FROM CAPABILITY BUILDING TO TESTDRIVING THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

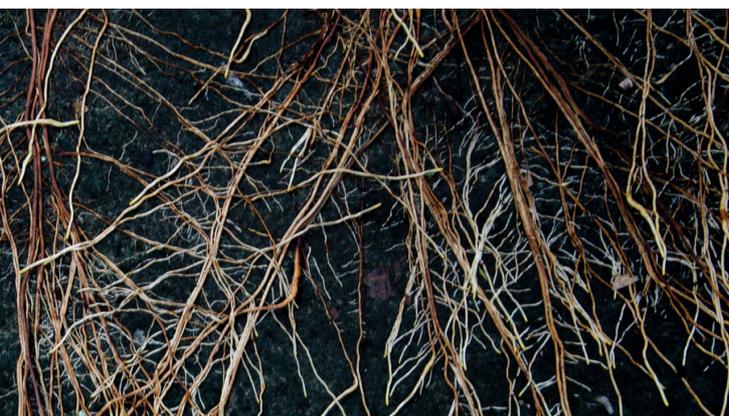
Significant financial pressure and the pronounced need to embark on new technologies had forced our client to completely reconsider their operating model. Market requirements for more sustainable, “green” solutions posed a threat to their existing product lines and, whilst technologically highly competent, weaker commercial capabilities often led to missed opportunities and ultimately poor financial performance. We had been enlisted to support their journey towards a more agile and leaner organisation that could win in fast changing, unpredictable environments. In a key effort to reduce complexity and duplication between the corporate center and the divisions and to increase clarity of responsibilities to create the freedom for innovation and quick responses, a new organizational model had been developed. Our support had three major strands.



A Winning Top Team

Working with the Executive Committee, we addressed multiple levels. Part of the work was targeted towards raising individual leadership capability. Based on the Change Vitality Indicator, all members explored their individual leadership and shared their development goals to support each other through dedicated feedback. Part of the time together was spent on getting to know each other better as fellow humans. Skillfully facilitated conversations about individual origin stories greatly increased mutual trust and understanding, so that the team was more comfortable in addressing tough issues and working them through with each other with honesty and transparency. We also facilitated sessions where key decisions needed to be made and helped them see how their behaviour in the room matched the professed change objectives – or not.

“I love the way you and your team really stand beside us, hold our hands, nudge and make it such a safe space to connect with something that was really difficult for us.”



Building Change Capability

A second strand of our work was an offer for internal HR leaders: A 2.5 day workshop, co-designed and co-facilitated with internal colleagues introduced the Still Moving Framework. With a clear focus on emergent change, the programme offered opportunities for the participants to learn about the theory of emergent change, and the leadership practices that enable this. Different activities provided the chance to practice leadership practices in the context of the programme and grow their inner capacities of presence, noticing and allowing what is the case to be the case. Through this effort, a shared language and understanding of the needed change leadership was established across the corporation and internal resources became available to the leaders in order to support them in their change leadership. As sequel to this effort, a holding team was established – a team of internal volunteers who met regularly with a facilitator to explore the visible signs of change they could detect and their observations about where the organisation still felt stuck in unhelpful patterns. This collated picture of the current state of the organisation was then fed back by holding team members to the top team who used the deep systemic insight to adjust and re-consider their leadership as needed.

Testdriving the New Model

Prior to the go-live of the new operating model, we ran a series of shorter “scenario plays” with relevant groups – short conversations where people were asked to look at a scripted, typical key moment, e.g. a deployment or investment decision to be made, and enact the necessary conversations from the perspective of the future roles. Participants were e.g. noticing how easily they slipped in defensive modes when they were assigned a specified role and that position felt threatened in the new set up. The empathy this created increased awareness of the own mindset – and that of others as well. This helped them to not only understand more fully what would be required of the designated roles in future, but also generated a broader understanding what systemically needed to shift in order to make the new model work. As a step up from this development, we used the last major management conference prior to the go live date to simulate the new world in the room. All executives were assigned to a fictional enterprise that looked very similar to what they aspired to as their future model and modeled the new structure as closely as possible. In this fictitious world, they were confronted with realistic decisions to be made, information to be gathered - all in a room that was also physically decked out appropriately, with different zones for different teams etc.

When we “pressed play” the room buzzed with energy, people easily embraced the new reality and embarked on completing what they understood to be their task. Different from real life though, we pushed the pause button every 30 minutes for teams to huddle and reflect on how they had shown up and what they had noticed in others in order to adjust where needed. The learning they mined from this experience was rich and greatly appreciated as it pointed out where the old mindset would get in the way of fully harvesting the rich opportunity of the new model. Through this, leaders could more skillfully help their teams move into the new world and reduce friction and unhelpful clinging to the past.

