



Drive Your Talents – Case Study SAS Belgium

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SAS is the world's leader in business analytics software, delivering breakthrough technology that transforms the way organizations do business. Globally, SAS enjoys revenues of over \$ 2.2 billion, and is a privately owned company which retains a family spirit, has a loyal customer base and continues to innovate and invest in customers. Significantly, SAS channels over 22 per cent into R&D keeping its technology at the cutting edge for customers.

In Belgium since 1989, SAS Belgium's workforce and revenue have grown steadily and consistently year in and year out. SAS Belgium added a local Luxembourg office in 2000. For 2008, revenue exceeded € 30 million with a full complement of more than 100 staff.

The SAS philosophy has always been to attract and nurture the best individuals and then integrate them into an even better team. The company accomplishes this by creating a workplace that fosters a healthy work-life. This results in employees who define their personal success in terms of the contributions they make to the success of its customers.

Culture of Growth

SAS Belgium's Patrick Van Deven, Country Manager for the last three years, has been in the company for 10 years. Since he took over as manager of the Belgian subsidiary, he's seen revenues increase by 40 per cent and new sales double. These results have been achieved with a relatively small growth in people, from 95 to 100 staff.

“ It's an excellent performance, “ he observes. “ Even during a business downturn software has continued to enjoy steady growth, with Business Intelligence outgrowing other software sectors. Within our own competitive sector, SAS now has the greatest market share as well as the second best market penetration in Europe. Belgium, in particular, exceeds the growth performance of other countries in which SAS operates ”.

Investing in People

But SAS Belgium also believes in taking care of its dedicated workforce, to help maximize their potential and renew their skill sets, more so in times of adversity and transition. During 2008 the entire SAS Belgium staff participated in 'Drive Your Talents', an intensive personal development program from Communicum which helped SAS people re-discover themselves, tap into reserves of personal energy and release motivational forces and dynamics that are essential for success.

“ For SAS Belgium, the Communicum program produces identifiable deliverables, halting employee attrition and resulting in a positive impact on employee motivation, personal energy and productivity. The Drive Your Talents program was instrumental in turning around attitudes within our company in a record time. “ Patrick Van Deven says.

A senior management change usually brings a renewal of focus and attitude. Patrick's challenge as the new Country Manager was to create a cohesive management team, strengthen staff interaction and minimize disruptive time spent on internal issues. He discovered that 'Drive Your Talents' could indeed unlock the personal energy inside people by revealing to participants powerful insights, as well as cementing relationships and clarifying roles within the company.

Drive Your Talents is an intensive program that concentrates on the real factors that motivate staff in their work and life. It starts from the basis that individuals are unique and that they alone can identify the key talents which uncap energy levels and boost motivation within a working environment.



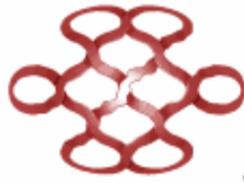
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About Communicum
Communicum provides unique training and coaching programs to enable companies, teams and individuals to realise more of their full potential.

Communicum's Programs:

- Drive Your Talents
- Drive Your Energy
- Drive Your Business
- Relationship Management
- Communication
- Sales Cycle Management
- Coach the Coach



communicum

Practical business framework

“ By focusing on people’s talents the program deals with the business side of employee motivation in a positive way, “ observes Patrick Van Deven. “ Many HR initiatives traditionally try to correct personal weaknesses, or faults. Communicum adopts a different approach, building upon strengths and reinforcing positive characteristics. What impressed us is the fact that Drive Your Talents is applied within a practical business framework, in line with SAS business objectives. “

A Drive Your Talents approach is built upon the belief that workers have a natural desire to deliver their personal potential and, when shown how, this will be reflected in their motivation, energy drive and increased commitment.

“We saw that by applying this approach, our staff discover their strongest points to find the things they do best and identify what they are allergic to. It brings into the open factors that may have been hidden, or unsaid. Before this course, there wasn’t enough consciousness within our team of these factors. We experienced that individuals love to do what they do best and appreciate how this program brings people together so they can truly enjoy their work even more, “ says Patrick Van Deven.

Sustaining the benefits

The program was conducted offsite, close to SAS Belgium’s magnificent Chateau on the outskirts of Brussels. It began in early 2008 with a kick-off presentation for the entire company. This was followed by 2-day intensive sessions for groups of 16 staff members as well as group coaching sessions and one-on-one coaching for senior managers.

The group sessions are typically spread over a period of 6 months, and a full training scheme can occupy a year of elapsed time. Coach-the-Coach training for management encourages top-level ownership, to drive the framework within the organization and, together with booster sessions, re-generate ongoing benefits throughout the organization. Long-term, the Drive Your Talents framework is so flexible it can be integrated into HR processes with the support of a Communicum steering group from time to time.

“ Essentially, with this distinctive approach, SAS staff learn something about themselves they will never forget, “ says Patrick Van Deven. “ The investment in Drive Your Talents is tremendous value. I’m convinced of the returns it has brought to our organization.”

A SAS Internal Employee Satisfaction Survey for European subsidiaries showed that SAS Belgium rose from second last in satisfaction rankings to fourth from top, measured before and after the Communicum program. In addition, in March 2009 SAS Institute announced that the company achieved the 2nd place in the ‘Best places to work in Belgium 2009’ survey. “ A significant part of our company culture is that we take care of our employees, “ says Patrick Van Deven.” It’s our second participation in the ‘Great Place to work’ survey and compared to our position the previous year we made a great jump up to second place, which shows that we have been able to use the feedback from the previous survey. That gives us even more reason to be proud.”



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“Drive Your Talents provides a lot of opportunities for self reflection, to look at yourself and your work from a different perspective. This program definitely gave me more confidence and insight in how to do my job to the best of my ability and how to use my talents to their full potential.”
Sales Assistant -
SAS Institute