



## Two-Day Leadership Alignment Session Shaves Months Off Cross-Divisional Project

### DID YOU KNOW...

75% of change initiatives fail, often because the people aspect is overlooked or mismanaged.<sup>1</sup>

Projects have an ROI of 143% when paired with an “excellent” change management program vs. 35% with no or “poor” change program.<sup>2</sup>

88% of business leaders say executing strategic initiatives successfully will be “essential” or “very important” for their organizations’ competitiveness over the next 3 years.<sup>3</sup>

61% of business leaders acknowledge that their firms often struggle to bridge the gap between strategy formulation and its day-to-day implementation.<sup>4</sup>

50% of executives “do not believe their culture is adaptive enough to respond positively to change.”<sup>5</sup>

### A Time for ALIGNMENT

After many months of stalled progress, the CFO of a Fortune 100 company engaged Executive Leadership Consulting (ELC) to work with him and his team on an organizational redesign and process improvement initiative. The Company had grown through a series of acquisitions, and it was time to **align all its divisions with common systems, processes and organization structures**. This alignment was being met with internal resistance, despite significant effort and even the help of a large business consulting firm.

The leader was well aware that this initiative had tremendous potential to increase speed and efficiency in the business with significant cost savings. However, after 7 months of delays with Phase I, he knew he needed “to shake things up” and get the team re-focused for Phase II, which had even greater complexity. The CFO knew that the Finance leaders across the company were not aligned behind the standardization initiative and his goal was to “get everyone on the same page before going into the next Phase.”

### Accelerated APPROACH Delivers Immediate Transformation

ELC partnered with the CFO and his team of 7 senior Finance leaders to design a 2-day Leadership Alignment Session. The goal was to align the team around the organizational redesign and get them to decide on the scope for multiple standardization and process improvement initiatives. There was initial resistance to the 2-day meeting from the 7 executives on the team, but the CFO was committed and knew that he could not risk the costs associated with a delay in Phase II.

The Alignment Session started with focusing on **why** the changes needed to be made, which led to the team’s creation of **ONE VISION** for the future of the organization. Then, using the new compelling vision as a foundation, ELC worked with the leadership team to connect the standardization project to that vision.

The session design also included space to freely discuss all the concerns through powerful questions. This is where the greatest impact was realized. Through a facilitated and productive discussion, the team was able **to come to agreement on the total scope** for the redesign and standardization, and **several significant process improvement and cost savings initiatives were created and vetted**. They bonded over their different (yet ultimately similar) resistance during Phase I and how their resistance impacted their teams and the rest of the company. The tone of the room toward the end was highly collaborative, even with some joking, which was a drastic change from the prior 7 months of weekly meetings.

## Proven Approach Transforms Resistance into RESULTS in Two Days

Ultimately, using our leadership alignment process, ELC facilitated the session for the team to debate the issues, create solutions and plan the transition strategy. ELC was able to get the team aligned and moving in **ONE DIRECTION** in just two days' time with higher collaboration and morale.

Our approach to work toward a common vision with open communication **broke through the internal resistance** in the leadership team to greater teamwork and focus on results. The initiative then moved forward swiftly to completion, with full executive support and no further disruption to the business. The final impact of the organizational changes proved to free up people from the transactional side of Finance so they could be more strategic and provide guidance to the business.

**"Had [the Alignment session] not been facilitated and designed in this way, we would have spent another six months in debate."**

CFO,  
Fortune 100 Company

After the session, feedback from the CFO was that morale and collaboration significantly improved, and that the team walked out of the session able to **immediately implement the plan with no delay**. The CFO admitted to being surprised at "how fast this process got them to decide and move" and acknowledged that "had it not been facilitated and designed in this way, we would have spent another six months in debate." In addition, the leadership team shared that they were

"pleasantly surprised" at the value provided in just 2 days and recognized the **importance of taking time up front to get alignment**. They acknowledged that this process "prevented a ton of rework," which had plagued the group in Phase I because of a lack of agreement, and got them back on track.

ELC continued to work with the CFO and his team throughout the project implementation, and created **ONE VOICE** in the organization. Ultimately, the team was able to work together **to make decisions faster**, making up for the previous months of lost time.

### References

<sup>1</sup> PwC's Human Change Management: Herding Cats

<sup>2</sup> Helping Employees Embrace Change. LaClair, J. & Rao, R. (McKinsey Quarterly), 11/2002

<sup>3</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unity Limited, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Change Capable Organization, Gossage, G., Silverstone, Y. and Leach, A. (Accenture; Outlook), 10/2010

## ABOUT EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP CONSULTING

At Executive Leadership Consulting, we partner with you to get crystal clear about your vision, communicate it so it resonates with each person in a way that inspires them, and align the entire organization to make it a reality. We help you determine what you need most right now — whether it's coaching, consulting, an executive retreat, or a half- or full-day workshop. Then, we bring our extensive experience from working with clients around the world to customize a plan just for you and quickly get it into action. For more information, please visit <http://ExecutiveLeader.com/> or reach out to us directly at (818) 473-5323.



### ALIGNING YOUR TEAM

- 1) Start with crystallizing the WHY
- 2) Determine the best way to ensure all concerns are discussed openly
- 3) Drive toward agreement with strong facilitation of the discussion



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