

Sakura Get Things Done

Case Study



Overview

Based in Malaysia, [Sakura Ferroalloys Sdn Bhd](#) is a global leader in producing green, high-quality carbon ferro-manganese products. Despite its strong market position, Sakura has faced significant challenges in recent years. These included operational isolation, logistical complexities due to COVID-19 and limited local technical support. Further compounded by fluctuating product prices and shareholder uncertainty, these hurdles created a challenging environment for strategy execution.

Recognising the need for enhanced leadership cohesion and effectiveness, Sakura partnered with [Customer Diagnostics](#), specialists in Strategy Facilitation and Building Effective Teams. The collaboration focused on strengthening leadership relationships and upskilling Sakura's management to effectively implement their strategic, tactical and operational plans.

The Leadership Challenge

Sakura's senior management team, while dynamic and experienced, struggled with internal conflicts that affected their collaboration, cohesion and operational efficiency. Services Manager, Johannes 'Douw' Botha, explains:



"We are a team of highly competent professionals, but with that comes conflict. Disagreements had reached a peak, making our work environment tough. Although we were still reaching our targets, every day felt like we were 'walking through syrup' and not being as effective as we could be."

The Solution

The main objective was to grow leadership team cohesion, effectiveness and efficiency. Central to this was the Achievement Process (AP), a practical performance improvement process underpinned by personal profiling for "Getting Things Done".

Phase 1: Implementing the Achievement Process with Exco

Key components included:

- **Self-assessment and feedback:** Surfacing team members preferences for getting things done under various conditions
- **Understanding team dynamics:** Valuing the different approaches of team members and their preferences for communication and teamwork
- **Introducing a common language for execution:** Establishing a shared language for getting things done
- **Applying the AP to real business challenges:** Training teams to use the AP methodology to address specific business issues
- **Instilling confidence and ownership:** Empowering team members to confidently and competently implement plans with collective ownership
- **Building healthy relationships:** Creating psychological safety to constructively address issues. This involved establishing rules of engagement and formulating collaboration pacts to align with Sakura's strategy.

"A major realisation was understanding how we each approached our work and how this contributed to the conflict and affected implementation. The AP's structured framework for collaboration facilitated better communication and engagement within our team and helped us move from problem-solving to execution," reflects Douw.





Phase 2: Expanding the Achievement Process

The second phase extended the AP to the next organisational level. Teams were introduced to each other's AP profiles, creating a deeper understanding of individual working styles and the dynamics likely to influence team performance. This phase was crucial in teaching teams to apply the AP to their specific challenges, focusing first on intra-team and then on inter-team collaboration.

"Phase 2 was about empowering teams to execute plans more efficiently, with greater buy-in and alignment. The common language of the AP led to more effective communication and cross-functional collaboration, resulting in getting more done in less time," says Douw, highlighting the significant impact of the process on Sakura's operational efficiency and team cohesion.

The Impact

On Senior Leadership Team Dynamics:

- A significant shift in behaviour, leading to increased tolerance and patience
- Communication within the team has become more open and honest
- The work environment has become more relaxed, with reduced frustration and improved relationships
- A noticeable change in attitude, leading to more efficient execution of plans
- The AP has been integrated into daily operations, becoming a core aspect of their approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

On the Broader Management Team:

- Conversational dynamics have evolved, with the AP becoming ingrained in the team's thinking and approach
- Efficiency in problem-solving has increased significantly, reducing meeting times from 1.5 hours to just 10 minutes
- Individuals and teams are motivated, leading to noticeable improvements in productivity and engagement
- The methodology has been effective in various applications, from internal communications to collaborative efforts.

Services Manager, Douw Botha, elaborates on the impact:

"We use the Achievement Process every day. It has improved how we solve problems, structure our thoughts and make decisions. We've also implemented it in our Management of Change System and Incident Investigation System to mitigate risks and prevent incident recurrence. The support from Customer Diagnostics has been vital in fostering widespread adoption and commitment to the AP across all levels. It's easily understood and has become integral to our KPIs and project management, ensuring that we meet our targets effectively."