

CREATE PRACTICAL BUY-IN FOR D&I

How Strategic Leadership on D&I Drives Momentum Case Study about Jansen Supply Chain Geel

D&I initiatives used to be common at J&J’s production site in Geel, Belgium, for many years. Posters, events and training were well received – but not necessarily connected to everyday business, leadership behaviour or the overall growth agenda. A new strategic approach of the site management team has led to significant traction on D&I – within just six months.

Some new people on the leadership team and a number of business priorities to deal with, including a strategic agenda involving quite some changes. It sounds like the standard situation in which management might well focus on ramping up projects and on execution excellence. Not so at Johnson & Johnson’s supply chain site Geel, which is part of the enterprise’s pharmaceutical sector, Jansen. The new General Manager for the site, Peter Putteman, wanted to explore the potential of the company’s D&I vision, which includes ‘maximising the global power of D&I to drive superior business results’. Together with his site leadership team and the site D&I team, he has managed to quickly build a robust foundation for D&I, including a SWOT, a site-specific business case and – quite importantly – tangible buy-in from the first two leadership levels. “D&I offered us a unique opportunity to **introduce a people focus to business priorities** and to **leverage D&I for the organisational change** that we need to facilitate in order to make our strategy a success,” Peter summarises his initial thoughts. The leadership commitment in combination with powerful tools such as D&I and Unconscious Bias workshops turned out to be key in the rapid creation of momentum.

Knowing where you (think you) are

In April 2016, the Site Leadership Team went through an initial discussion led by the D&I champion for the site, Steven Rusch, a process engineer. For both, the leadership team and the D&I team, it was important to assess strengths and weaknesses regarding D&I, and to identify some of the opportunities they saw. While many D&I activities, either in a Global Corporate or in a BeNeLux Campus context were clearly seen as strengths, the team also identified a need for a cultural change that would stimulate more awareness for D&I and specifically for the practical benefits everyone – not only the traditional target groups – can reap through D&I. That D&I could **contribute to the strategic agenda**, called Geel 2020, was also identified as a great chance.

Quantum leap in awareness and readiness for action

In June, most members of the first two Site management levels participated in an online presentation organised by Johnson & Johnson's Global Office for Diversity & Inclusion. "The attendance was twice as high as usual and this was very encouraging for us," D&I champion, Steven Rusch, commented after the event. The session provided inspiring facts and examples around Unconscious Bias and led to conclusions regarding meeting culture, reaching out for feedback and to pay attention to the professional execution of people processes. It also created appetite for a more concrete, action-oriented and implementation-focused step going forward.

Designing concrete activities to mitigate Unconscious Biases

An intense half-day workshop was planned for August in which the entire site leadership team and the D&I champion participated. To make the session effective and be clear about the overall development process, the team spent two hours – ten days prior to the workshop – to go through site-specific D&I questions and discussions. "The preparatory discussion was hugely helpful for us in the team to gain more clarity about some **site-specific aspects of D&I** and subsequently allowed us to focus on an in-depth learning experience", Ina Vannijvel, member of the site leadership team, remarked about the pre-work that was completed. The approach also freed up some time on the workshop agenda itself and made the follow-up work a natural part of the venture.

The Unconscious Bias workshop "Challenges in Realising the Business Case for D&I", led by Diversity researcher and consultant, Michael Stuber, included an icebreaker about objectivism biases and an initial hour focusing on the value-creation process that makes the most of differences (aka. The Propelling Potential Principle). The largest part of the session focused on six different types of unconscious biases, each explained and illustrated **by empirical findings, everyday examples and exercises**. "The fact that we created lists of mitigation activities for each type of unconscious bias separately offered a very powerful methodology," Steven Rusch observed. In his D&I role, he is always seeking for new approaches to bring D&I to life as a part of existing business or leadership processes. In addition to personal activities that the participants planned out at the end of the workshop, they also decided to adapt the workshop format and bring it to the group of their direct reports (called ELT, Emerging Leadership Team).

Participating in the cascade multiplies the impact created

Instead of simply encouraging the leaders in their organisation to participate in a D&I and Unconscious Bias workshop, the site leadership team committed to expand the format to encourage interacting and involvement of their direct reports. A full day was dedicated to this, six weeks after their own session. It included the core content of the D&I workshop for the senior leadership team plus individual pre-work and two additional interactive elements. A large part of the **site leadership team was involved in the deployment of the session** itself.

The strategic agenda of the site, called Geel 2020, became the backbone of the storyline for the event. Six leadership team members assumed ownership for the six **strategic priorities** and developed plans for how to **integrate D&I** so as to add value in each of these areas. “Working on the creation of practical value-add from D&I as part of our strategic agenda has widened our perception of the topic and showed us new ways to create synergies and to connect dots”, Bart van den Hauwe, member of the site leadership team, said to share his experience of the preparation process. He used to be involved in the global product management D&I team where they created the role of a D&I observer at meetings. This rotating role serves the purpose to provide feedback on group interactions from a D&I perspective at the end of a meeting. Bart hosted one of the poster sessions that sought input from emerging leaders to mature the integration of D&I into strategic priorities.

A solid road-map and clear accountabilities for 2017

A total of some 40 managers engaged in two half days of D&I learning (in the morning) and practical planning (in the afternoon). The **practical planning of individual steps** was done in peer group discussions that helped everyone to mature their thoughts and approaches. The organisational planning was done in poster sessions hosted by members of the site leadership team. An additional D&I session focused on topics that were not covered by the strategic road or that cut across the strategic areas, such as communication or change management.

“We are extremely happy with the breadth and depth of the content that we have generated in addition to the remarkable engagement, commitment and energy,” said Peter Putteman after the end of the session. He is also clear that this is a foundation on which the journey continues. With the support of the D&I team, they have integrated D&I in the **goals and objectives for 2017** as a next step and in addition to using D&I to drive the strategic roadmap, Geel 2020.