

## A Case Study in Dramatic Change

### Background.

The H.R. Director of Lafarge Cement (UK) and the Works Manager at Hope Cement Works – Derbyshire (now one of the largest sites within Tarmac Cement Division), recognised the need to make a step change in business performance and that this could only be achieved by the engagement of everyone at the plant, starting with the Top Team.

The Wadenhoe Consultancy was commissioned to facilitate this work, using their “Back from the Future” storyboarding process. One important step in this process was to describe the current team situation in terms of:

- What things about team performance gave them satisfaction and why?
- How did the team currently work together?
- What were the helpful and unhelpful team behaviours?
- What were the possible barriers to reaching the future team situation?

### The Need for Dramatic Change

At this stage it was clear to everyone that the team needed to take a breath and think about how their team effectiveness could be dramatically changed. This resulted in a three-stage programme:

**Stage 1:** A series of 1:1 coaching meetings, using psychometric feedback to develop self-awareness and collect individual views of team blocks and barriers.

**Stage 2:** Movement to a “performance” setting, with all the disciplines and practices of a professional theatre company in terms of:

**Warm-up:** Using various exercises to energise and prepare the team for some creative and spontaneous work.

**Action:** Using concrete examples to play-out how each team member would work if the future team situation were in the “here and now”. Here the outcome was that through experiencing the other team member’s situation, each member got some clues as to what behaviours would achieve the desired effect.

**Closure:** Following the main action, I helped team members to receive some supportive feedback. Rather than encouraging an intellectualised analysis, I asked everyone to share the **Feelings** they had experienced. This provided each team member with the Confidence and Competence to try new approaches.

**Stage 3:** Each team member was given a further 1:1 coaching session to review their reflections and individual actions. The team was given the opportunity to form action learning sets to review progress. Six weeks after the event the team met to review progress and take corrective actions prior to implementing their “Back from the Future” communication plan.

**Stage 4:** A key element of their Communication Plan was the preparation of departmental videos, telling their “story” from a future perspective, which were then shared with the whole site and Group Senior Management.

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