



Organization solidifies its future through leadership development

This 110-year-old refinery was a cornerstone for a major oil company's operations and had a reputation for engineering excellence, but its strengths were no longer translating to business success. So what did it take to reinvent its future?



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The Challenge

Construct and successfully implement a bold new future

Although this 110-year-old refinery was a cornerstone for a major oil company's operations and had a reputation for engineering excellence, its strengths were no longer translating to business success. Profits were slipping and returns on expenditures were becoming difficult to justify. In addition, a recent reorganization had created an organizational malaise—an environment where employees were merely complacent in a “nothing will ever change” world and leadership felt powerless. To make matters worse, the company was facing unprecedented challenges and competition regarding environmental issues.

The business unit leader saw the refinery's potential, but he knew that capitalizing on it would require a major shift in the organization's culture, productivity and competitive positioning. JMW partnered with the refinery to provide employees, across all divisions and levels, an opportunity to help create a work environment that fostered empowerment, high performance and breakthrough results.

The Work

Develop strong leadership, accountability and collaboration at all levels

Multiple interventions to shape and fulfill on the vision. Through a blend of consulting and leadership development programs, the executive team regained ownership by authoring the new future for the refinery, which resulted in five “challenge projects.” They identified not only specific extraordinary outcomes for each project, but also areas of opportunity for leverage and milestones to be delivered. These five projects were designed to provide a focus and context to create pathways for repositioning the refinery as the “leading downstream business unit”—and included significantly elevating business efficiency and getting ahead in the environmental game.

JMW also conducted candid interviews with cross-sections of employees that revealed cultural barriers to moving the new vision forward; a series of education programs that provided support to emerging leaders in the unionized workforce; and work sessions that helped employees at all levels set and



deliver on targets, as well as identify critical pathways and actions to address any conflicts or setbacks that occurred

The Results

As a result of this work, the refinery became one of the leading downstream business units of the oil company's system, posting a material turnaround in their income for two consecutive years. Costs were reduced by 30%, without compromising performance. Labor-management relations were markedly improved and aggressive safety and environmental targets were met. On this foundation of restored performance, the refinery leaders envisioned and built a new future strategy for working with clean fuels – a strategy which the company then supported through major capital investment on an accelerated timeline.

JMW helped this refinery post record revenues, increase production by 30% and meet aggressive safety and environmental targets, while it got clean fuel delivery objectives on track for completion five years ahead of schedule.

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