

valuing the difference

TEAM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

ROUNDAABOUT

tms roundabout

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inside this issue

- 3 From Dick's Desk
- 4 Training Tips
- 5 Developing Leadership Capability in the Air Force
- 7 Management Development in the Media
- 8 Communication & Problem Solving
- 9 In the Spotlight
- 10 TMS RIDO Scale
- 11 What's New at TMS
- 12 Welcome to the Network

Gardner House
9 Gardner Close Milton QLD 4064

PO Box 1107 Milton QLD 4064

ph. +61 (0) 7 3368 2333
fax. +61 (0) 7 3368 2311

email tms@tms.com.au

www.tms.com.au

building teams A LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE

The poverty and destitution witnessed by Major General Michael Smith AO on overseas service during 34 years in the military made him an ideal choice for CEO of Austcare. With a 'can-do' attitude and a strong drive for achievement, Major General Smith holds an impressive track record of success leading Austcare's humanitarian relief and development operations throughout the world. So what happens when a man with a serious work ethic and a penchant to drive change meets a passionate group of idealists?

Austcare, an independent humanitarian aid and development organisation established in 1967 in response to the International Year of Refugees, specialises in providing emergency relief and sustainable development to refugees, displaced people and communities affected by landmines. In the four years that Major General Smith has been CEO, he has led the organisation through some major changes. In that time, Austcare has doubled the amount raised annually through fundraising, significantly increased staff numbers, lowered staff turnover and rehabilitated its reputation as an employer in the overseas charity sector. But according to the CEO, there is still much more to be done if Austcare is to further reduce poverty levels and enable beneficiaries to live in dignity.

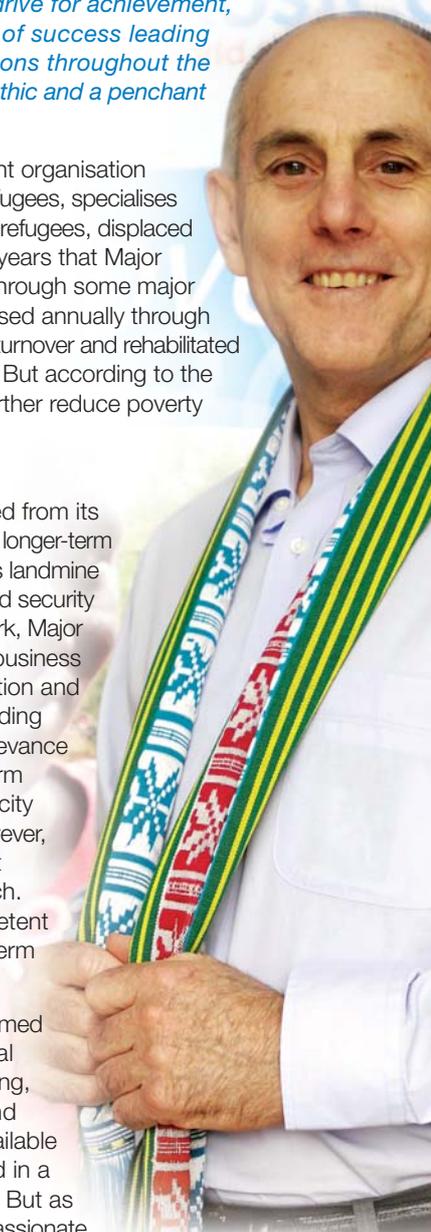
CHALLENGE

Before Major General Smith's arrival, Austcare had branched from its traditional focus of assisting refugees in emergencies to include longer-term development projects in countries recovering from war, such as landmine removal in Cambodia, Afghanistan and Mozambique, and food security in East Timor and Zambia. Although very supportive of this work, Major General Smith felt that Austcare should not neglect its core business of emergency relief to refugees on which Austcare's reputation and expertise had been established. Indeed, he felt that responding effectively to emergencies would demonstrate Austcare's relevance to the community and provide an entry point for longer-term poverty reduction programmes based on building the capacity and sustainability of local communities at the grassroots. However, the slow response of some team members during recent emergencies made him question the viability of his approach. He needed immediate action, while some of his very competent project staff were more comfortable with methodical long-term project planning.

The demographics at Austcare were interesting too. Accustomed to leading a mainly male military workforce, Major General Smith encountered a work team consisting primarily of young, well-educated women committed to Austcare's ideals and prepared to work for salaries thirty percent below those available in the corporate sector. Their passion for Austcare resulted in a level of staff engagement rarely seen in other organisations. But as the saying goes, too many cooks spoil the broth. So, when passionate debates between employees recently slowed the Board's decision to re-brand, Major General Smith sought outside assistance to help resolve internal tensions and maintain the momentum for change.

continued over page...

Major General Michael Smith:
Quick to see the advantages of the Team Management Profile





building teams A LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE

Austcare's significant growth had also affected the team's performance. The organisation structure had changed with the closure of state branches and the opening of three overseas offices. The head office in Sydney had grown from 12 to 30 employees and from 10 to 40 volunteers. But the real expansion had occurred overseas, from just a few people to more than 60 in its overseas projects, plus a totally new programme to deploy Protection Officers to UN Agencies in some of the world's toughest situations like Sudan. Major General Smith could see that some staff were feeling burnt out because of this rapid expansion.

OBJECTIVE

Aware that Austcare lacked unity on the best way forward, Major General Smith sought help from John Walker from Walker Wilson Associates Pty Ltd. The two had met previously on a social basis and Major General Smith felt that he could work with and trust John to assist senior managers and their teams. John, a skilled behavioural science consultant with over 20 years experience in organisational behaviour consulting, approached the situation pragmatically. Major General Smith needed help understanding the strengths of the management team at Austcare and the team members needed guidance to become high-performing and self-directed teams.

SOLUTION

To create an environment of understanding and improved communication between team members, John started by using the Team Management System psychometric profiling instruments. The Team Management Profile (TMP) was administered to help Austcare's senior management team understand each other's preferred work style. Then he gave them an overview of the High-Energy Teams Model so they could work through their performance issues.

John held a session with the Austcare senior management team to discuss the Profiles. "We asked the management team to guess where each other sat on the four work preference measures used in the Team Management Profile," he said. "With this perception exercise, the managers were able to gain a better understanding of where others are coming from and that staff members may have very different preferences in work styles.



Margerison-McCann Team Management Wheel

Amazed at how insightful and accurate the Profiles were, the participants each prepared a chart that indicates 'The Best Way to Relate to Me'. These were placed above their desks, and according to John, have helped improve relationships between team members. "When people have similar Profiles, it is easy to get along. The Team Management Profile shows you the strengths and preferences of people you may find harder to get along with. I think that is its most powerful use."

According to Major General Smith, the Profile partly explained why emergency response was not his team's strong suite. Apart from their youth and life-experience, Austcare would need more "Thruster-Organisers" and "Concluder-Producers" to deal with emergency crises.

"Because of my military experiences and my Profile split between Thruster-Organiser and Creator-Innovator, I value people who can take action quickly," Major General Smith said. "But not everyone is like me. The work we offered in the past, combined with being a charitable organisation, have attracted idealistic people with preferences at the top of the Team Management Wheel.

To prepare for our renewed focus on emergency work, I realised that we would probably need to recruit people with a Thruster-Organiser preference to supplement our team."

"We've also used the Profile to make educated guesses about our stakeholders. Now we are matching our approach to the way we think they prefer to operate. We even try and match them with people from our team who share a similar Profile, although our limited resources place limitations on this approach."

"The Team Management Profile has also reinforced the obvious: people perform best when they are in roles that they prefer.

Being a charity, we need to find that match between preferences and roles to keep our people. After all, we know the pay alone won't do it!"

With a strong foundation established using the TMP, John then applied the High-Energy Teams Model to help Austcare address the organisational changes that come with growth, and to think about Austcare's future in a more strategic way. According to Major General Smith, this was a great opportunity for change to be driven by the management team, rather than being directed by him.

The High-Energy Teams Model addresses eight fundamental areas that all teams need to resolve in order to perform effectively. It focuses on eight strategic questions:

- Who are we?
- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- What is expected of us?
- What support do we need?
- How effective are we?
- What recognition do we get?



High-Energy Teams Model

John believes that when systems are in place to provide answers to these questions, teams are better able to generate a high level of internal energy which ripples through the organisation. "The High-Energy Teams Model is helping address gaps in our strategy," says Major General Smith. "It provides a framework for developing better action plans which, to date, has been one of our weak links. Now we are focusing on what is critical to Austcare, such as:

- re-designing processes so decisions are not exercises in consensus;
- preparing a team values statement to enhance team cohesiveness;
- re-designing communication processes to keep everyone in the loop;
- ensuring adequate recognition for stretched staff; and
- understanding what is expected of our teams."

RESULTS

Major General Smith is delighted - both because he feels the model will clarify what the team should be doing, and because his managers are taking more responsibility for achieving their goals.

"I know I'm often impatient - as my wife has reminded me for more than 30 years - but Austcare needs to continue to transition into a more dynamic organisation if we are to remain

relevant in an increasingly competitive market that is now dominated by large international charities," he said.

"Our team learned more about ourselves through the Team Management Profile than we ever expected, and this is providing a firm basis to help us move forward."

About Austcare:

Austcare is a wholly Australian-based, independent, specialist humanitarian aid and development organisation that is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-political. Since 1967, Austcare has worked in over 30 countries to reduce poverty, build local capacity and enhance human security. Austcare's mission is to assist refugees overseas, displaced people, returnees and those affected by landmines to rebuild their lives and to reduce poverty through the expert delivery of development programmes in partnership with local communities and other agencies.

John Walker is in private practice and can be found at: www.walkerwilson.com.au.



from Dick's Desk

BY DICK MCCANN
MANAGING DIRECTOR

2007 looks like being a year of globalisation for Team Management Systems!

Long term users of TMS – Bonnie Cooper and Tom Gibbons – have formed a new company, Team Management Systems (Americas) Inc, to distribute TMS throughout North and South America. With a new Latin American translation of the TMP recently completed and a Brazilian Portuguese one on the way, things are really on the move in that part of the world.

We have also signed a new agreement to distribute TMS throughout Europe via UK based company TMS Development International. With the TMP available in 11 European languages, our Australian-developed products are now truly global.

Closer to home we are continuing our push into Asia with the launch this month of a full Japanese translation of the TMP and the associated Personal Development Workbook. This Profile will be available via our new e-delivery system which allows a client to complete a questionnaire online and within minutes their Profile is available for viewing, complete with a norm data interrogation facility. Facilitators can make the Profile available for immediate viewing or delay it until a suitable workshop is delivered. Our Japanese Network Members love the system, as control of the delivery process is in their hands. Remember, that this delivery system is also available for the English version of the TMP. So if you are moving more towards e-learning, please contact our office to find out more.

I have just arrived back from a four-city tour launching the new Organisational Values Profile (OVP). We now have two fully researched Values Profiles (the personal

Window on Work Values Profile and the Organisational Values Profile) which can form the basis of virtually any intervention centred around values.

The OVP is a multi-rater assessment of the perceived 'values-in-use' throughout an organisation. It enables a quick organisational assessment of employees' values to be made, based on the Window on Work Values Model. Invariably there are significant differences in constituent business units and this information is vital to a senior management team trying to develop a common organisational culture.

Sometimes we find that the behaviours exhibited by managers throughout an organisation do not always align with the 'espoused' values. Often this is because people's underlying personal values don't match the values they pay lip service to. Used together, the Values Profiles can uncover situations like this and an appropriate intervention designed to align personal and organisational values.

An initial organisation-wide values assessment using the OVP can lead to multiple team workshops designed to develop a Team Charter containing behavioural ground rules based on agreed values. The OVP takes a snapshot of current values based behaviour but the team can then decide if the underlying values meet their performance needs. The way is then opened up to help them move from 'where they are now' to 'where they want to be'.

During this year, there are values accreditation workshops scheduled for Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Singapore. If our dates don't suit, then remember accreditation in all TMS Profiles can also be done in your own time and place, using our electronic self-accreditation process.