

From Technical Professional to People Leader for Engineering Managers at Berendsen

Background

Berendsen UK is the UK's leading supplier of textile hire and laundry services operating over 60 sites across the UK and employing over 9,000 people.

On each site, an Engineering Manager plus a team of Engineers are responsible for developing and maintaining all aspects of the technical operation. Tasks range from managing a new installation, ensuring regular maintenance, minimising environmental impact and ensuring reporting on technical and engineering matters.

The Engineering Managers work closely with their counterparts in Production and Logistics, where there can sometimes be natural tensions. For example, Production understandably want to maximise productivity by keeping the machines running at capacity, whilst Engineering want to carry out maintenance to ensure long term efficiency.

The Scenario

A Chief Engineering Manager was committed to the development of his team, both as technical professionals and as managers. He recognised the need to give equal status to the development of his Engineering Managers as leaders of people, as well as technical specialists.

The key challenges were as follows:

- The Engineering Managers had generally been promoted into their roles because of their technical

abilities rather than their people leadership skills

- They had received limited training to date in leadership skills
- The above two points meant that they were often poor at delegating and developing their teams
- Initially, they did not necessarily see the benefit of leadership development and in some cases, saw time spent away from their factories as a waste
- Relationships with Production Managers were often strained, and the Engineering Managers did not have the necessary relationship skills to address the issues which occurred

The Solution

The Curve Group designed a two-year modular leadership development programme to develop the Engineering Managers into People Leaders. Key features of the programme were as follows:

- The programme was launched at the annual engineering conference
- The first step in the programme was to bring the Engineering Managers together in groups to ask them about the people/leadership challenges they faced. The design of the next two modules was then based around these findings so that the link between the Engineer's pain points and the programme content was clear

- Each module resulted in an individual action plan. The action plans were reviewed by a senior manager to support embedding of learning and visibility of business impact. The senior managers were trained in this assessment process
- The 2-year programme was certificated at two different levels
- Successful completion of Level 1 resulted in membership of an engineering decision making forum
- Level 2 of the programme commenced with an on-line 360-degree feedback process supported by individual face to face coaching
- The design of the remaining programme was based on the needs emerging from the 360-degree feedback process

Outcomes

Feedback from participants has been very positive. Typically, the Managers report being cynical about the need for the programme initially but quickly realised its value and advocated that other areas of the business should follow a similar approach.

Senior managers can point to behavioral changes achieved through the implementation of the action plans involving both soft and hard measures.

Senior managers have been able to differentiate and evidence the performance of different Engineering Managers via the evidence created during the process.

The programme has already been rolled out to Logistics Managers with plans to involve Production in the next financial year.

How To Ensure Success When Developing Your Own Leadership Development Programme?

- Involve managers in identifying their own needs from the outset of the programme to ensure engagement and programme relevance
- Sponsorship at a senior level and support from line managers is essential. The Chief Engineering Manager and the Regional Engineering Managers demonstrated their commitment by attending some of the modules themselves. This gave a very clear message about their commitment to the process
- Ensure practical application of learning to the role is achieved as part of the programme, rather than expecting managers to do this on their own
- Require participants to demonstrate the value they are adding to the business, both to maintain engagement with the programme, but also to demonstrate return on investment to stakeholders
- Recognise and reward success

“It was great! I was new to management and knew my job technically really well but didn’t have a clue about managing people. This gave me techniques I could put into practice straight away. It also let me understand that people have different ways of doing things that might be different to me, but this doesn’t mean they aren’t right, they still get to the end point.”

Jamie Pepper
Engineering Manager, Berendsen

If you’re interested in finding out more about how we can help you with the strategic and operational aspects of your Recruitment and HR management i.e. with your people, we would love to hear from you. Give us a call on 01295 811486 today or find out more about what we do and other ways to get in touch via our website: www.thecurvegroup.co.uk.

The Curve Group are The award-winning Recruitment and HR Superheroes on a Quest to transform people’s working lives. We are passionate about helping businesses to transform their HR and Recruitment functions by creating extraordinary people solutions, enabling them to achieve their strategic business aspirations.



www.TheCurveGroup.co.uk



sayhello@TheCurveGroup.co.uk



+44 (0)1295 811486