

Case Study: Full RPO for Buhler UK

I am now in my third year of working with the Buhler Group having carried out a full RPO for the organisation. We looked at ways to improve productivity, quality, resource costs and how to increase engagement across the business. Buhler UK is a global market leader in a diverse range of technology solutions including manufacturing machines for food production and processing, grain milling and advanced materials, such as diecasting for the automotive industry.

I spoke to Jerome Poupard, Operations Manager for Business Area Digital Technologies, to see how the group has benefited from my support:

History – family-owned global business

The Buhler company is over 150 years old and is still family-owned by three sisters. We have 11,000 employees worldwide and when the current owners' father stepped down a few years ago, his daughters joined our Executive Board. Buhler specialises in producing a range of machines, which are used worldwide in a range of different sectors including:

- Food processing machines for chocolate (55% market share) and pasta (40% market share).
- Food sorting machines for rice – with a 30% market share, our focus is always on food safety, using optical sorting machines for rice to produce perfect, white grains free from other materials that are safe to eat.
- Advanced materials – diecasting for the automotive industry (55% market share).
- Plus, we also create solutions for breweries and distilleries, wheat and grain milling, fruit and vegetables, pulses and spices, animal feed, renewable energies, grinding and dispersing, and many other areas – please visit our website for details.

One of our key business objectives is to reuse waste and reduce energy use by 30%.

Feeding the global population by 2050

Buhler is also leading the way when it comes to finding innovative solutions to feed a rapidly growing global population. It has been proven that farming insects for human consumption uses far less resources than traditional farming methods for cows, sheep and chickens. By 2050, insects could account for 15% of global protein production. We are continually looking

for new ways to feed the human population and this is one of our main 'feel good' factors for the group.

Increased productivity and engagement

Working with Cherie over the past two years has led to a clear increase in productivity as a result of better manufacturing output and use of resources, as well as increased employee engagement:

- ✓ Productivity = 10% increase (8% in year one and 2% last year).
- ✓ Manufacturing = biggest change; improvements have led to better use of resources.
- ✓ Engagement = successful culture changes and people management.

Changes to management style and structure

As a result of working with Cherie, we have seen some big changes to our business culture. Cherie has improved employee engagement across the group by helping us to focus on our people and their skill sets. Previously, we had an 'old school' approach to management with one leader managing 50 employees and only two supervisors. We discovered that we lacked the right level of management and necessary skill set for those managers. There was also a general lack of understanding about those working on the shop floor and there was no control of staff overtime.

Cherie helped us to change our management structure. As a result of our first level implementation, we now have 8 individuals who are accountable for certain areas with team-sizes of between 4 and 10-12 people. We have also defined specific KPIs around team skills, safety, cost, quality and delivery, i.e. number of units produced per day. We have developed our managers to deal more effectively with people, increasing their level of understanding and focusing on specific actions with specific people.

Developing future leaders

One of the greatest achievements we've seen so far by working with Cherie is the progression of young people into junior manager roles. Previously, these individuals were not aware of their own capabilities; they could not even stand up and talk in front of a group of people. However, our new junior managers are now capable of running meetings with 15+ people and have a bright future ahead of them, which is a big change and wonderful to see!

Future objectives

As we continue to work with Cherie, our level of understanding is getting increasingly deeper, as we work on any weaknesses and make continual improvements. Our new senior management team has also played a key part in this ongoing process. Our Managing Director is fully focused on removing silos from our organisation by helping our people to understand our business objectives. By gaining greater insights from the shop floor, there has been an alignment across the entire group - everyone now understands the 'bigger picture' for the business. Moving forwards, we are now implementing PTR assessments to ensure drive and focus in certain areas of the business. We will use the findings of these surveys to create actions for further alignment across the group.

We brought Cherie into our business because we needed an outside, professional perspective on our operations - and we have seen dramatic results. Previously, we lacked the time or focus to be able to implement what was needed, as such tasks were not part of our core business. My advice for anyone who is considering bringing an outside professional into their business: never be afraid to ask for help and support when you start a new journey.