

CHERIE CONCANNON



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Raising Performance in Operations

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**REXAM**

# Ian Clayton, Plant Manager, Rexam

## Core Problems

1. Survey results revealed the plant as one of the worst sites for employee engagement.
2. The morale based on the survey wasn't good so much so it put the plant under the spotlight.
3. Getting more responsibility, accountability from the Team Leaders.

Ian chose to work with Cherie Concannon to find the solution to the plants core problems and help him achieve the key objectives below.

*"I see the work Cherie's doing as a key driver with my key guys"*

I Clayton, Plant Manager

## Key Objectives

1. Improve communication.
2. Engage employees.
3. Raise shop-floor morale and positively impact plant KPI's.
4. Instil a culture of trust and openness.
5. Develop a strong First Line Management Team.

## Results...so far

- The Plant Manager was promoted from Assistant Plant Manager to Plant Manager.
- 23% increase in engagement level as measured through Rexam's Global Employee Engagement Survey. This won 'Most Improved Plant'.
- The Plant achieved 12 production records in the first 12 months of

the RPO programme Cherie introduced.

- Improvements and reduction in costs.
- Improvements in performance.
- Identifying unused talent – Succession planning
  - Shopfloor promoted to Team Leader
  - Team Leader promoted to Shift Manager
  - Shift Manager promoted to Quality Manager

## The Programme

Raising Performance in Operations programme is designed to achieve optimum performance from shop floor, & improve performance under pressure.

## Outcomes

1. Improves communication throughout the plant.
2. Raises shop floor morale.
3. Resets shop floor behaviour towards absences, health & safety.
4. Up-skills First Line Managers with all aspects of Leadership skills.
5. Positions shop floor to be open and receptive to change.
6. Resets the standards of leadership and management within a plant especially for First Line Managers.
7. Resets culture and expectations on what can be achieved.
8. Identifies potential unknown trouble spots that may be blocking optimum production.
9. Identifies unused talent, leading to promotion from within.

### Improves Communication Throughout The Plant

The communication structure of the plant is transformed as a result of the programme. The communication between the First Line Managers and the shop floor improves immediately as a direct result of the

quarterly one-to-one meetings any issues at this level will become apparent from the quarterly survey reports.

*“it’s an opportunity for the guys to talk about the frustrations they have, sounding board, when guys are doing one-to-ones they come away with a list of things that are important to their team. So really it’s a mechanism to get things from the coal face up to the management in a flow. So we don’t talk about any specific KPI’s it’s all about morale, what can we do better, what can we do differently, what help do you need to do your job better. Wrapped up in a feel good experience. To allow people to have some input involvement”.*

(The psychology behind the one to one’s is focused on the First Line Managers, who have been coached by Cherie, creating a set of emotions within the operatives that elicit emotions which influence high performance. High performance comes from people who feel valued, recognised, important, needed, special and appreciated).

Any issues that may arise can be solved and any potential future changes can be introduced via this process to gauge responses or circumvent potential dips in performance.

### **Raises Shop Floor Morale**

The programme will effectively raise shop floor morale in a number of ways. First Line Managers will engage the operatives in a specific way. The quarterly one-to-one meetings are structured in a way that is essential to influencing the operatives desire to achieve high performance. The First Line Managers are coached in how to motivate operatives during each one-to-one meeting so they have a positive experience, this is an essential aspect of the programme.

Another essential aspect is after each stage operatives are shown a copy of the report before senior management which is unorthodox and raises morale because they feel important and this influences them to engage. Initially shop floor have proven to be suspicious of the one-to-one's but after stage 2 when nothing bad arises from the meetings trust is built and at this point they have bought into the programme. Any problem areas causing low morale will be identified and addressed as part of the process.

"Perceptions were turned around within a couple of one-to-ones. The guys were sceptical about the initial one-to-one's and once they saw that it's not going to be about having a go at the guys, the final caveat is not going to be "OK you're doing a great job but we need you to do a lot better, a lot more, a lot faster and a lot cheaper" not a poisoned message, it's an open dialogue. That in itself has created a lot of trust between the Team Leaders and their immediate teams and vice versa".

### **Up-skills First Line Managers**

The programme will up-skill The Plant's First Line Managers in all aspects of leadership so it becomes embedded subconsciously and naturally. Leadership skills such as dealing with conflict, having difficult conversations with positive outcomes, personal communication - ensuring the tone/meaning of message sent is the message received, decision making, influencing, emotional intelligence, giving positive and negative feedback, confidence/image/self-projection etc. Strengths and weaknesses of the First Line Manager's working style will also be identified by Cherie so each First Line Manager will become aware of their natural drivers underpinning behaviour, the impact of behaviour on others and what they need to do to flex their behaviour to elicit the desired response from key people.

“What we’ve had here are Team Leader’s who were put into their TL position on their technical ability without any leadership or managerial ability. Basically they were good guys down on the line who got promoted but because they have Manager or Leader in their title doesn’t mean to say that they’re actually proficient in that”.

This mechanism [has upskilled TL’s so they can] have conversations with the guys about how it’s going, what improvements do they think we should make, what could that Team Leader do to make that individual’s life/work easier. And that is key”.

...now we’re doing [Raising Performance in Operations] what is directly measurable is looking at the feedback the TL’s are getting from their direct reports. You’ll see some really good positive things.

### **Resets the standards of leadership and management within a plant especially at First Line Manager level**

The practical coaching received is exactly the same for all first line managers. Every stage is scripted and practiced in half day workshops which engages First Line Managers. All First Line Managers understand how to transfer the newly learnt skills.

“The biggest one is getting the TL’s to realise they are responsible directly for the motivation and development of their teams. This is all part of the TL’s role because in my mind the TL is a modern day Supervisor.”

### **Positions shop floor to be open and receptive to change**

As part of the process shop floor are positioned to receive changes without their performance being adversely affected. The process includes the psychological process of transition and change. This means changes can be implemented and shop floor will adapt quicker reducing the impact on productivity.

“Just started doing the 1-2-1’s with TL’s . If I had started that 2 years ago the TL’s would have been extremely suspicious. Now there’s none of that at all. Basically I just explain look guys I want a one off opportunity to do a 1-2-1 with you. It’s not to replace the SM’s... it’s my opportunity to hear first hand from yourself how do you feel it’s going? What could we do differently...it’s been received really, really well.

Key point is 2 years ago that would have been received as a difficult encounter and now it’s not, as a direct result of the genuine buy-in Cherie has with the guys. Cherie has broken down those barriers”.  
...now we’re doing [Raising Performance in Operations] what is directly measurable is looking at the feedback the TL’s are getting from their direct reports. You’ll see some really good positive things.

### **Identifies unused talent, leading to promotion from within**

The programme places Cherie so she can effectively identify potential leaders amongst the shop floor. Cherie during the programme builds trust with the First Line Managers and develops an in-depth knowledge of strengths and weaknesses at this level, this positions her to recognize leadership potential valuable for succession planning.

### **Identifies potential unknown trouble spots that may be blocking optimum production**

Cherie is positioned to identify potential trouble spots and issues before they escalate and cause major barriers to achieving objectives or creating conflict.

## **Structure of the Programme**

The foundation of the programme is First Line Managers holding quarterly one-to-ones with members of their team in both year one and two. The quarterly one-to-ones will be supported by Cherie coaching the First Line Managers with the right set of skills so they are prepared to correctly deliver the one-to-ones.

### **First Quarter – Stage 1**

Cherie will coach the First Line Managers in 4 different groups in 3hr sessions. All First Line Managers will be coached practically step-by-step through the whole process; how to approach operatives on the shop floor, inviting them to the meeting, deal with every possible response they could get, an introduction to the forms and how to use them and how to conduct every minute of the one-to-ones with members of their team. The First Line Managers will receive extensive coaching on how to perform the one-to-ones and are coached to respond to all the possible reactions so they are prepared for every outcome. The First Line Managers will role play with a guest operative and the sessions will be filmed so they can watch themselves this is practical and not training.

After they have been coached First Line Managers will conduct the one-to-ones, surveys will be sent to their teams and all data will be sent back to Cherie's team.

### **Second - Fourth Quarters – Stage 2- 4**

Stages 2 – 4 involves coaching the First Line Managers in 4 groups for 3 hour sessions. The First Line Managers are coached in how to provide feedback from stage 1 to their team. Cherie will also coach the Managers through the results of stage 1. They will also receive coaching on how to perform the next stage of one-to-ones with role

play, guest operative and filming. The session will include how to design the next set of questionnaires in. Cherie will trouble shoot any problems that have arisen.

After they have been coached First Line Managers will conduct the one-to-ones, surveys will be sent to their teams and all data will be sent back to Cherie's team.

### **Fifth – Eighth Quarters – Stage 5-8**

Stages 5 -8 involves coaching the First Line Manager in 4 groups each session is 2 hours. Cherie will provide the same coaching as the previous stages.

After they have been coached First Line Managers will conduct the one-to-ones, surveys will be sent to their teams and all data will be sent back to Cherie's team.

Cherie is available to be contacted via telephone or email by the First Line Managers to help solve and coach them through any difficulties that may arise.