



## Leadership Development

Creating a leadership community

**When Boots Manufacturing needed to 'break the mould' and revitalise their approach to leadership Apter Development responded by starting their managers on a long journey – setting new standards of achievement and integration along the way.**

Rosie Blau described it for **People Management** magazine, two years after it started:

**"Chamonix provided the inspirational Alpine surroundings for a leadership development programme at Boots - that has helped to redefine the organisation."**

### The Challenge

After major reorganisation which resulted in making 300 staff redundant, Boots Manufacturing (BM), the manufacturing division of the Boots Company which is known for its strong, safe brand and traditional, paternalistic management structures – decided to shake up its leadership.

*'The executive knew that we were going to have to get the business back up and moving again,' says Andrew Kerry, then Organisational Development Manager at BM. 'And yes, it was partly about morale. But it was also about bringing something new to the way people worked.'*

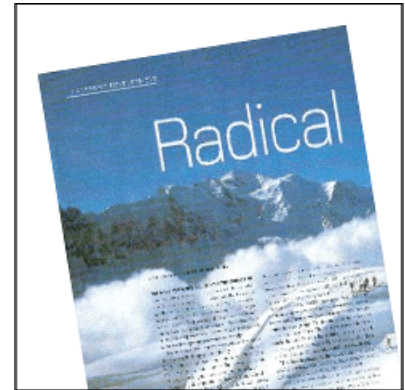
Leadership development had always had a high profile in Boots, but never before had it been seen as a real driver for change. Along side the decision to put in place a highly focussed leadership development programme a staff survey was conducted, the results influenced the programme's design.

### The Response

Apter Development created the development programme and were, with internal HR team, unwavering in the belief that the programme should be 'radical' and genuinely change the nature of the leadership in BM. Breaking down functional boundaries and vertical structures; developing a more flexible – and creative – community of management talent able to deal with the fast pace of change and the new challenges faced was a firm focus of the programme.

Over a two year period Boots had the courage to take nearly 300 managers to the Alps. Senior and upper-middle managers from different functions at Boots from major plants in the UK, France and Germany were chosen to go on the five-day programme in several groups. The location itself was an inspiration to participants, many of whom were 'old hands' who had seen it all, done it all before and required a real shake up in their mindset.

Initially there were doubts about the destination. *'The pilot programme had been run in the Lake District, but training centres in the UK are so expensive that easyjet flights and a log cabin hotel on the outskirts of Chamonix actually proved cheaper.'*



A challenging environment...

**'...a leadership development programme... that helped to redefine the organisation.'**

Rosie Blau  
People Management

**'This programme was primarily about breaking the mental, structural and cultural boundaries that inhibit performance'**

Steve Carter  
Apter Development

#### Case notes:



#### Manufacturing

**Boots Manufacturing** has been producing high quality health and beauty products in the UK since 1935.

It develops and produces items for both Boots Group PLC and non-group customers, including over 5,000 different products and 350 million units per year.



*'The sheer inspiration of the surroundings was incredible,' said Adrian Potter, then Head of Manufacturing for Beauty and Personal Care, who attended the programme. 'Most courses start with trainers marching into a classroom and asking everyone to introduce themselves, but this leadership programme started 'in a field, knee-deep in snow'.*

This was not an 'outward bound' programme although access to the outdoors was woven into several aspects of the event. Activities were about responding to uncertainty and shaking assumptions of what was possible, a major plank of Boots' leadership plan. Leaders needed to take responsibility for their actions rather than hide in the 'culture of permission' that previously pervaded.

### The Results

So is it possible to change the culture of an organisation? Yes, says Andrew Kerry. *'You can change people's behaviour. The expression of a culture is primarily through the way people behave, in my belief. If you start to change the way people behave with one another then you start to change other things too.'*

All agree that the programme has definably changed the organisation. Creating new networks has meant that people previously unknown to each other have worked on products together since their return. Senior management now spend time on the shopfloor talking to staff and engaging with the business.

Further measures of success were captured in the staff survey – which saw a significant improvement in 20 of the 40 elements surveyed.

More than a year after the programme was launched, delegates remain enthused and many groups still meet up informally.

### A Final Word

***'This programme will long be remembered as a watershed for the way we want to train people.'***

Adrian Potter  
Head of Manufacturing for Beauty & Personal Care  
BM

### Challenge based development

Challenges establish complex situations and an environment in which the team individually and collectively must operate. Participants explore through open-ended activities the real obstacles and opportunities they face.

### Split personalities

Apter Development designed the programme using 'Reversal theory' – a theory of motivation and personality – as a key design principle.

According to this theory, people are driven by eight motivational states. Psychological health – and performance – is achieved when people are able to experience all eight states effectively.

Organisations need to be more motivationally diverse and allow greater levels of inconsistency for the individual in order to maximise performance. All 8 states have something unique & powerful to offer, very much in tune with the current demands for a more flexible, innovative, personally responsible and mutually supportive workforce.

One of leadership's essential functions is to create a 'performance climate'. This will then prompt behaviours beneficial to the organisation and employees alike.

'Leadership Communities' can build 'motivationally rich' climates and foster a sense of community in others.

Apter Development provides cutting edge consulting and development in the fields of: strategic capability, leadership and management development, employee research and elite performance.

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