

## Transforming Top Team Capability

### Delivering the strategy

**URSUS was acquired by SABMiller plc in 1996 as part of its expansion into Central and Eastern Europe. In the early days, companies were led mainly by expatriate managers, but over a period of time, resident nationals have taken on more senior responsibilities.**

The aim was to help create a cohesive and effective Senior Executive team who could really mobilise the whole business to the new levels of performance implied in the strategy. The team, a mix of ex-pat and local managers, enjoyed cordial working relationships as a whole, but were reluctant to engage within the team in a full and committed way.

This project followed a successful strategy setting process, involving the top 30 managers, which had been judged as producing greater strategic alignment and focus within the business as a whole. The focus of this intervention was at top team level.

As with many other Apter Development interventions the heart of the work was on building defined changes in performance and was underpinned by what we have termed the performance equation.

#### Pre-workout

Initial research was undertaken to establish the purpose and role of the Senior Executive team based upon 8 key responsibilities for an executive team, namely:

- Strategy Setting and Management
- Strategic Transactions
- Operating Principles
- People - including Talent Management and Mobilisation
- Financial Viability
- External Relationships
- Risk - including Opportunity Risks
- Governance

These provided the framework for 45 minute interviews, conducted individually with all members of the Senior Executive team concentrating on the importance and current execution of each of these responsibilities at team level (i.e. as a collective responsibility). The CEO later reported that the interviews themselves were beneficial and developmental, raising awareness and informal discussion about key issues of team performance.

A short report summarising their discussions was written and distributed to the executive team members before a 2½ day off-site workout.



#### The Performance Equation

$$P = A \times M \times O$$

P = performance  
A = capabilities required  
M = mindset needed  
O = opportunity to perform.

Each of these factors can be sub-divided into a number of critical 'sub-factors'. In this case, much of the workout was focused on the mindset sub-factors in the equation (Awareness, Confidence and Connection).

***".. an excellent consultant partner for URSUS Breweries in Romania, where Steve Carter (Managing Director, Apter Development) has consulted to us on various issues from strategic planning and organisational change management."***

Dieter Schulze  
CEO, Ursus



## The Workout

A variety of formats/ activities were used to maintain energy and levels of motivation. These included:

- Small Group Discussions
- Whole Team Reviews
- 'Structured Rounds'
- Competitive Debates
- Thought Experiments
- Two hours of skiing and a toboggan Grand-Prix!

The Senior Executive team enjoyed vigorous, open sessions on several issues and were prepared to be much more open and self-critical than in the past. Working through the agenda they were able to both address issues that had been confused, establishing new priorities and practical actions AND were able to model a way of working together that could continue in the future.

## Outcomes

A key decision, collectively taken, was to make top team effectiveness and specifically team impact a strategic lever for developing a performance culture. This was addressed through:

- **Faster, slicker, more strategic decision making**  
(a re-engineered decision making structure and clarified roles through which the top team discharge their collective responsibility).
- **Regular top team performance feedback**  
(individual peer review based on the defined vision of what it takes to be a top team member and the interpersonal skills required).
- **Re-energised employee experience**  
(the top team identified its collective responsibility for setting the climate for performance in the business. Alongside the ongoing leverage they exert as role models, actions regarding employee segmentation and the development of a new Employee Value Proposition were established)

***"Steve's involvement with the company has happened at a time when we have seen major improvements in all elements of our business and Steve can certainly claim his contribution to our success."***

***"Steve has built huge credibility with the URSUS Breweries senior management team as a whole."***

Dieter Schulze  
CEO, Ursus

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

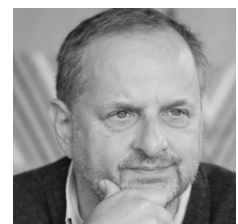
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For more information about our services, email:  
[enquiries@apterinternational.com](mailto:enquiries@apterinternational.com)

**Apter Development Offices:**

The Innovation Centre, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3EH UK  
Tel (+44) 01509 228896 Fax (+44) 01509 228856

7381 Clouds Hill Place, Manassas, VA 20111 USA  
Telephone (+001) 703 361 6061 Fax (+001) 703 367 9044



Steve Carter  
CEO/Senior Partner

[scarter@apterinternational.com](mailto:scarter@apterinternational.com)