

1. Intercultural Training, Research and Problem-solving

a. *Diversity and Organisation Change*

The client had been preparing for deregulation at the end of 1998 for three years. They were to progress to three "high-tech" centres from their existing multiple, labour-intensive, regional centres. Due to the entrenchment of both union and ethnic management groups in different centres, a sophisticated approach to change and staff and organisational development was required. Managing Differences began this process by tackling the ethnic diversity stranglehold. In the first stage of this change strategy, we introduced ideas of change management, process improvement and conflict resolution which targeted faulty processes. These were caused by lack of cross-cultural understanding, and distrust and miscommunication between different identity and power groups that were largely formed around ethnicity. This programme continued for 18 months and involved three targeted centres.

Size: 2,400 staff – all levels (\$ value: \$500,000)

Stage 2 involved the training and development of 18 staff as "internal consultants" to deliver cross-cultural communication programmes to staff ("Toolbox talks").

Stage 3 involved the selection of high potential managers for retention in the new organisation. They were trained as coaches for cross-cultural communication, change, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural team building.

Stage 4, run concurrently with Stage 3, involved working with the centre managers (two thirds of whom no longer have jobs) to effectively carry out their responsibilities during the final stage of transition over the final six months.

This involved both coaching and mentoring skills as a number of these people needed to develop the capacity to extend their career either within, or external to, the client. It was decided that a pro-active approach that encouraged senior staff to make their own choices and provided appropriate development support would work more effectively than an outplacement model.

b. *Cross-cultural Diagnostic, Learning and Employee Development*

This company is owned by the Chinese government and managed by an Australian management group. It has been established as a model for this Chinese industry and is the only Chinese venture to attract foreign capital in this field. Managing Differences was engaged to conduct a dual culture (Australian and Chinese) analysis and design a first line supervisor training programme for Chinese staff (delivered in Mandarin), and a management programme for Australian expatriate staff.

These programmes were designed to address five key areas of cultural misunderstanding and consequent poor performance as identified in the preliminary diagnostic. While addressing supervision and management skills, the programme had the added dimension of developing common operational language and understanding among Chinese and expatriate staff. The programme was conducted over three weeks in Xian with 55 Chinese supervisors, and over one week on-site in remote Central China with management.

The programme also surfaced a number of other issues, which led to a Stage 2 development programme within six months. This programme was considered by all parties, including the Chinese government and the Australian Ambassador to China, as a spectacular success and unique in Chinese-Australian joint venture relations.

Stage 1 (\$ value \$75,000)

c. ***Intercultural Learning and Employee Development***

Our work with this Australian, Japanese and Indonesian joint venture over three years involved:

- Briefing 60 Australian expatriate families for living and working in Central Java.
- In-country management training for 40 senior executives from Australia, Indonesia and Java, and interventions for cross-cultural effectiveness for all levels of management and supervisors.
- Diagnostic and training needs analysis for the transition to a modern company with state-of-the-art equipment.
- Re-entry debriefing and transition support (skills and learning audit, personal counselling and career development) for returning expatriates.
- Evaluation of joint venture process in terms of cross-cultural effectiveness and recommendations for future strategies.

Size: 3,000 staff and 140 managers involved (\$ value \$600,000 over 3 years)