

Client Spotlight

Allianz—Portugal

CHALLENGE: Develop a new company culture to replace a set of different cultures inherited during a period of repeated mergers and acquisitions; to bring out the creative potential of the workforce, hidden behind a conservative culture and management style

SOLUTION: Introduce The Ken Blanchard Companies' Creating Your Organisation's Future (CYOF), Building High Performing Teams® (BHPT) and Gung Ho!® organisational change processes

APPROACH: Begin with training for 60 team leaders and then move on to roll out Gung Ho! throughout the organisation; assess impact with Annual Climate Surveys; create a Project Team to accompany roll-out in all departments, and implement new Gung Ho! systems

Allianz Portugal's Organisational Development Manager, Patricia Brito Moon, admits she was more than a little surprised when, in 2002, the Allianz CEO came back from a Blanchard executive briefing in Stockholm raving about the Spirit of the Squirrel, the Way of the Beaver, and the Gift of the Goose. Having heard about the successful way in which Blanchard's Gung Ho! had been used elsewhere in Europe by leading companies, he concluded that this change management process was the perfect vehicle to drive forward a new organisational vision and future at Allianz.

"I read the *Gung Ho!* book," says Patricia, "and I thought these are the basic principles of organisational development I studied at university and learnt throughout my professional life. I was still very surprised that my CEO was prepared to risk this kind of idea in our company, especially considering the quite conservative style of the insurance industry! I thought it was very bold of him. But I recognised—as he had done—that one of the strengths of Gung Ho! is that it is so unusual and unforgettable—it's a breath of fresh air!"

Taking the Gung Ho! Training for Trainers course in London, Patricia began to understand how the principles could be integrated with HR policies and the work already done with Blanchard's CYOF process. Gung Ho! was an effective way to establish the new vision, values, and mission statements into the daily life of the workplace.

"We rolled Gung Ho! out in a very intensive way, doing two-day workshops with every manager in the company. Actually, we're still rolling it out—it's a process, not a project. We have reminders of the programme everywhere, and seeing those every day reminds everyone that they have a process by which to evaluate the behaviour of their colleagues, as well as their own behaviour, and a background against which decisions are made in the company."

Allianz has introduced other practical ways to remind people of the Gung Ho! principles. There is a Gung Ho! project team—nine people from different departments—which launches new initiatives every three months. "For the Gift of the Goose, for example," says Patricia, "we developed a 'Goose Card' that an employee can send to anyone else in the company when they recognise that they have done something really aligned with our values. Such a simple idea, but it boosted enthusiasm throughout the company."

The Payoff

"Gung Ho! makes you re-evaluate your attitudes and it changes you. People have higher expectations now," says Patricia. "They're more aware of the behaviours that are expected, so they are critical when things don't happen as they should, and they say things like 'that was not very Gung Ho!' They

hold each other accountable, but they're also more demanding with themselves. Our last Climate Survey shows that employee engagement has strongly improved and colleagues agree there has been a significant positive change in the company. In fact, positive feelings have improved in every department. The Gung Ho! philosophy has really become the way we do things in Allianz Portugal—I think it's filtered through to people's personal lives too—that's got to be good.”

Allianz Portugal is part of the Allianz Group, one of the world's leading financial groups, headquartered in Germany. Allianz Portugal employs 740 people in the life and non-life insurance business. Patricia Brito Moon has responsibility for HR Development areas such as training, management development, internal communication, and social responsibility, and she leads the Gung Ho! Project Team. She has had an international career in HR management, including working in Japan, France, and Australia.

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