



Emerson- executive training

Background

St. Louis-based Emerson is a global leader in bringing technology and engineering together to provide innovative solutions to customers in process control; electronics and telecommunications; industrial automation; heating, ventilating and air conditioning; and appliances and tools.

Long celebrated as a model of stable, consistent earnings growth, Emerson now finds itself in the midst of a radical transformation. Though the company continues to enjoy significant success, Emerson management has recognized the need to transition away from its traditional product-focus toward a more customer-oriented mindset in order to thrive in the new millennium's rapidly evolving business climate.

Historically, a majority of Emerson's management and marketing staffs have emerged from technical and engineering backgrounds, with little to no formal training in the field of marketing. Not surprisingly, marketing functions have taken a back seat to technical concerns in driving the company's strategic processes.

Challenge

In the view of Emerson leadership, the Internet boom of the late 1990s was problematic for the company. Despite its continuing success, it was nonetheless a product of the "old economy." Built on an industrial model, it was not ideally suited to the fast-and-furious world of the millennial new economy, and new, Net-savvy competitors posed a meaningful threat to the company's markets.

How, then, could the industrial giant reshape itself into a sleek, agile 21st Century player?

Solution

A key requisite for Emerson's transformation into a more customer-centered enterprise involved equipping the company's marketing professionals with innovative, next-generation knowledge and tools. In order to execute on this critical mandate, Emerson retained the Gronstedt Group, a Colorado-based training and marketing communications consulting firm, to help develop the "Industrial-Strength Marketing" initiative.

No fewer than 680 top Emerson executives graduated from one of 11 three-day training intensives held in Evanston, Ill., Paris, Hong Kong and Tokyo during 1999, where they analyzed a series of on-point case studies, best practices from a wide range of industries and successful pilot programs from within the Emerson family of companies. This comprehensive training seminar highlighted the most progressive concepts and ideas in the field of contemporary integrated marketing, with the goal of helping participating company leaders realign their own business units along a variety of customer-centric criteria.

The program was co-directed by Dr. Anders Gronstedt, President/C.E.O. of the Gronstedt Group, and Professor Clarke Caywood, Chairman of Northwestern University's Integrated Marketing Communications program; program faculty included some of the best and brightest minds on both the corporate and academic sides of the integrated marketing communication field. Participants in the United States sessions studied with a series of forward-thinking industry experts and professors from Northwestern, as well as some of Emerson's own top executives, while local experts in Europe and Asia taught the non-U.S. sessions. Speakers were carefully briefed on Emerson's history and challenges, and all presentations were tailored to address Emerson's particular dynamics.

All corporate executives participated as students in the first few training sessions and division presidents were required to attend the training with their senior management teams. The presentation of cases like *Plant Web* (a revolutionary field-based architecture that changes the economics of process automation – http://plantweb.emersonprocess.com/whatis/w_index.html) and the participation of leadership sent a powerful message that the Emerson Marketing Institute is not a little red schoolhouse in the workplace, but a practical and powerful source of new skills and knowledge for the “Customer Century.”

In addition to hearing presentations by the experts, participants were allowed to get their hands dirty by engaging in a series of interactive exercises using actual case studies. Participants were also encouraged to *be* the experts by providing their own insights into the issues and challenges they faced in their jobs.

The program received extremely high praise from the participants, who returned to their divisions charged up and ready to implement new ideas. More than 95% of the participants ranked the program as "excellent" or "good" and nearly 98% of the participants were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to recommend the program to a colleague.

Conclusion

Emerson is now well on the way to being an industry-leading, customer-centered marketing powerhouse. By emphasizing long-term planning, leveraging the Internet, growing its brands and strengthening customer relationships, the \$15 billion global manufacturing group is revolutionizing its operational processes. It's focusing more and more on harnessing the power of database technology, Internet connectivity and mass customization capabilities – in sum, on identifying the customers with the greatest profit potential and tailoring communication and services to their individual needs.

The Industrial-Strength Marketing program has played a critical role in making Emerson a more customer-centric company by providing senior management with a new frame of reference. Terms like “customer insight,” “branding,” “CRM” and “public relations” have entered the cultural vernacular and are now central to the mindset guiding corporate strategy, whereas for years the only universal language was that of engineering and financial accounting.