

**Organization Intervention – Business Transformation Team**  
**Industrial Automation Industry**  
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**Organization Background**

Advanced Solutions International (ASI) is a subsidiary of Applied Controls, a \$10 billion strategic business group applying sensing and control expertise. The core of sensing and control technology is to collect and integrate information from multiple points across an office building, an airport, or a school to optimize the performance of critical systems, like heating and air conditioning, lighting, video surveillance, access control, and fire detection.

ASI's business strategy focuses on three core elements: Safety, Reliability, and Efficiency. From a safety standpoint, ASI's integrated offerings protect factories, refineries, and other industrial buildings, as well as people and assets. ASI's reliability solutions improve availability and reduce downtime through proactive asset management and early detection of potential problems, ranging from corrosion to equipment failure. Finally, its efficiency programs and products help increase energy efficiency and optimize performance of the entire supply chain.

With presence in more than 60 countries across the globe, ASI has a true international workforce. While it is headquartered in Phoenix, USA, the majority of the employee population is in Europe (over 8,000 employees). Its organic growth opportunities are in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle-East, and Africa), as reflected in its strategic objectives for years to come. The EMEA senior leadership team is based in Brussels, Belgium. The organization is structured along three main axes: commercial, operations, and functions. The functional and operational leadership roles have a Europe-wide scope, providing expertise and support to each of the regional commercial leaders and their organizations. The commercial structures are aligned to sub-regions (e.g., Southern Europe).

ASI Europe senior leaders come from a variety of professional and national backgrounds. With 12 different nationalities, seniority that ranges from 1 to 27 years in the company, and a spectrum of professional roles, this is a truly diverse team. They mostly work virtually, travelling an average of 70% of their time, and meeting face-to-face as a team approximately three times a year. Yet, they all clearly rally around a common passion for ASI's business and are equally engaged in making it successful. They are directly inspired and supported by ASI's new Europe Vice President, Tom, who just recently joined the organization in Brussels, on assignment from the US. His mission is clearly to drive the region to meet its aggressive growth objectives.

**Business Problem**

While ASI has had many years of success, it has failed to meet its objectives for the past five quarters. After careful consideration of internal and external factors, the

global leadership team has agreed to engage in a significant business transformation to meet the new market demands—shifting from a product and project focus to an advanced services focus. This demands proactive use of the relationship ASI has with its customers to work earlier in the process of identifying and resolving customer problems, using a people- and knowledge-led solution.

In essence, the whole organization will need to adopt an integrated business model that combines its traditional technology advantage with its yet-to-be-fully-explored service competency. It is then agreed that the EMEA region will pilot this new business model, optimizing its solid customer base and significant growth opportunities.

As the plan was being formed, it became quickly apparent that the European team would need the assistance of an OD expert to ensure that all of the organizational and cultural elements would be put in place to ensure success. The EMEA HR leader, Joseph, called upon the services of a consultant with whom he had partnered on a few major change projects in the past. Joseph invited the consultant to join him and the business transformation leader, Scott, for a first face-to-face meeting in Brussels. Scott's 20+ years of experience in the industrial control industry and his current strategic sales leadership roles positioned him perfectly for the project leadership.

## Entry

During the Brussels meeting, Scott and Joseph exposed their expectations for this project: the consultant would provide the model and tools for successful change, and she would coach them during the implementation process.

However, the consultant felt that it was necessary to do a more formal diagnosis of the situation to identify the success factors to ensure that she was serving the organization's core needs. The following action plan was then agreed to:

- Conduct interviews of all key stakeholders to understand what they knew and thought of the business transformation
- Understand decisions and accomplishments to date on the transformation
- Identify organizations directly involved in and impacted by the transformation
- Understand the project structure, including project team and other resources

The analysis quickly showed that, while the new model itself was clearly defined and agreed to by the senior leadership team, it was not well understood outside of their team. In addition, little had been done to provide the structure and resources to make the project successful; no formal team assigned, no definite success metrics, no budget allocated. However, one essential success factor was in place: the project had an active, engaged sponsor, Tom. Because of his leadership role in the EMEA region and his seat on the global leadership team, the VP was best placed to drive the change project and provide the necessary resources.

With that knowledge, the consultant organized a meeting with Scott, Joseph, and Tom, for which she suggested the following steps:

- Charter a project team that includes functional, commercial, and operational leaders

- Facilitate a work session with the project team to define team norms, roles, objectives
- Define reasonable scope for a project pilot
- Develop a new model implementation plan for the pilot and the full project
- Develop a control plan to monitor progress

### **Chartering the Project Team**

To help with the first point, the consultant provided a few guidelines to help select the team members from among the ASI EMEA key talent. It was agreed that the team should include people who supported the transformation, as well as managers who may be more resistant to the change. Also, special attention was paid to ensuring a representation of diverse organizations (Sales, Customer Service, Marketing, HR) as the new model would impact work processes across all roles. Then came a key concern: what were those people doing today and how could we ensure their new appointment to the team would not negatively affect their current activities? Once the team membership was finalized, Tom and Scott jointly invited each member to the team's first work session, a 2-day face-to-face meeting in Marseille, to be held in just 10 days.

As each team member entered the small, crowded meeting room, it became clear that few knew each other. The consultant had planned a few ice-breaking and getting-to-know-you activities throughout the two-day agenda, so she felt ready to help them develop a sense of camaraderie by the end of the meeting. But she also wanted to make sure that the team accomplished its aggressive objective for the short meeting: agree to roles, norms, and objectives.

At the consultant's request, Tom joined via video-conferencing to kick-off the meeting. He shared his expectations, vision, and passion about the new business model. The video-conferencing session was completed, and the team got to work--introductions, agenda, house-rules, and a fun ice-breaker, followed directly by a messaging exercise. The consultant engaged all participants to write a two-sentence, elevator speech about the business transformation. This would allow everyone to gauge what they knew of the project and how they had each interpreted Tom's macro message into their individual micro messages.

The exercise was revealing--the majority of the team members, all key managers in the organization, had only a vague understanding of the transformation at hand.

#### Questions

1. Assess the process as outlined in the case.
2. What would you do now?