



BP Refining Leadership Programme II

Refining is a unique business with a 12,000 strong workforce across over 20 separate business units. As a key part of BP's business, Refining has undertaken a sea change in attitude over the last few years about how it presents itself, both internally and externally, as part of a drive for commercial success in its sector.

'Refining Leadership Programme II' (RLP2) was instigated at the beginning of 2004 to involve the top 200 leaders within the organisation and engage them in new work and leadership processes that they would then drive deeper into their own business units.

Refining were looking for creative consultancy and support in ensuring that the leadership models moved from theory to action.

What we did:

BP brought together a design team of senior BP leaders, academic learning partners, Purple Monster and Just Add Water; the parties worked closely for a period of three months to create a programme with a unique delivery model incorporating a mix of content, experiential and reflective time. We collectively delivered five programmes, each with 50+ participants, for a full week in locations around the world, generating for BP's leaders in Refining a seminal opportunity to work more deeply on processes and skill sets in a safe environment with their peers. We worked collaboratively with consultants and the business, creating, directing and delivering a participative engagement programme which ensured that leaders started to espouse the pre-eminent leadership principles within Refining.

We used content which included business and commercial objectives interwoven with soft skills such as storytelling, attitude and behavioural processes. To ensure that the messages were delivered effectively, considerable time and effort went into training the core leadership team in the delivery techniques required for them to co facilitate the programme alongside the Purple Monster and Just Add Water facilitators. The programme was culturally inclusive, recognising the Anglo-American nature of BP and participants from a variety of countries.

To support the work we developed a 'field book' filled with topics, tools, useful hints, stories and models that the participants added to during the course of the week, made their own, and took back into their workplace for ongoing use by themselves and their teams.

Outcomes:

The commercial objectives of Refining were surpassed four months prior to the target date. This was directly correlated to their people and the emerging, inclusive culture that was formed. The programme was considered an absolute success with the desired population. The tools and practices outlined were driven so deeply into individual business units that it quickly became apparent that a lot of content had been assimilated by people coming onto later courses. Participants so eagerly took up some of the soft skills that storytelling became a widely accepted form of instilling advice and best practice around sites.

Testimonials:

"The best organised, managed and most insightful leadership programme I have been on in my career ever."

Walter Thunker - Regional Vice President

"What we expected when we contacted Purple Monster was to meet some story telling type folk who would probably be way over the top with some weird ideas about how we should say stuff. What we got instead was a group of highly committed professionals who changed dramatically the way we communicated with each other and with the business at large. If I were to try to sum up in a single thought what it was that changed, it was that we moved from communication to engagement. To get there, we spent some time 'in their world' working experientially with the tools and techniques of stories, theatre, film, drama, literature, music, movement;

basically spending quality time in the 'art' of communication rather than the process. We learned a great deal about each other, discovered in some depth how we show up to other people and became stronger as a team than we had ever been. One of the capabilities of our leadership model was 'catalyses change' and together we certainly did that. I would have no hesitation in recommending Purple Monster to any business."

Jeff Pitzer, Business Unit Leader, Cherry Point Refinery, Washington, USA

"I'd be very happy to talk to anyone about how great Purple Monster is. Through experiential learning which is engaging, fun and insightful, Purple Monster helped BP's refining leaders to understand our business, our Leadership model and to be a part of creating a BP Refining culture which spans our many heritages.

I saw them bring together people from the different companies & backgrounds (BP, Amoco, Arco, Veba/UK/USA/Germany) and help us to create a new culture. Purple Monster's activities gave us insights into ourselves, different cultures, the Refining organisation, and our interfaces with the Supply & Trading organisation, which resulted in more effective communication and better business performance.

Purple Monster has helped us to develop a workforce that is more connected, aligned and open to possibilities."

Kathy Hirschfeld, Business Unit Leader, Bulwer Island Refinery, Australia

