



European Commission

Lot 6

„Design and implementation of workflow and management processes”

2003 - 2008

For 5 years (2003-2008) Schouten & Nelissen was the lead contractor of various tailor made organisational development activities and standard training course for Lot 6 „Design and implementation of workflow and management processes”.

The activities were implemented in Brussels, Luxembourg and across various locations in Europe. The scope of this project was around 1 million Euro per year.

A range of tailor-made activities (see 1) and standard training courses (see 2) were provided.

1. Tailor-Made Activities

A range of tailor-made activities were designed and implemented in co-operation with various DGs and EC institutes, including team building events, away-days and strategic planning workshops. Some examples are mentioned below.

A. Team Building Events

S&N has provided the European Commission’s DGs and Agencies with teambuilding events and Away Days – including facilitation services for **Cabinet Team Building Events**. The following is an example of an event for a Cabinet team of a new member state.

Client Request

Team Building for the Cabinet team of a new member state presents particular challenges – for instance, a potential clash between the “EC veteran” culture and that of the new member state. One of the objectives was to reconcile these cultures, to help Cabinet members from the new member state to be more efficient by increasing their understanding and practices of EC Cabinet cultures and by developing their cross-cultural communication skills. At the same time, it was expected that other Cabinet members would develop a greater awareness of their own cultural “glasses” and biases. Our needs assessment indicated that some team members were eager to discuss communication issues – particularly ones related to information sharing.

Our Solution

While some members expected to spend a couple of relaxing days playing golf and taking walks in the woods, others intended to use this opportunity to break some taboos, discuss cross-cultural differences, and improve communication and work relationships within the



team. Some team members shared somewhat reluctantly their modest expectations on what a teambuilding event could bring. One of the first challenges was to reconcile these differing objectives. The two-day event was designed in order to address concerns and expectations of all participants. It included some icebreakers, several experiential learning activities to discuss delicate issues openly, a presentation and a “practice lab” on cross-cultural communication, group discussion on improving communication and sharing information, and indeed some leisure time.

Impact

Participants left with an increased awareness of their initially seemingly contrary perceptions, expectations, and interests and with practical solutions on how to tackle these issues in future. The need to further develop informal ties within the team, to brainstorm together and take into account individual needs was clearly articulated. The participants were satisfied with the time shared together and the action plan they produced. Most importantly, some critical relationships significantly improved in the event.

B. Away-Days

Since 2003 S&N has facilitated a number of so-called Away Days for the EC. Below we present one example, organised for 350 participants of DG SANCO in June 2006.



Client Request

S&N facilitated the 2nd Away Day for a Directorate of over 700 people based in three different European sites. Given the multicultural and multidisciplinary nature of this Directorate, and the multiple geographic locations in which it operates, communication was challenging and team cohesiveness rather loose. Also, mobility was high, with a significant decline in knowledge. The main objectives were to raise awareness on knowledge sharing and effective communication. The SANCO design team requested a “light” one-day programme, yet yielding constructive inputs for greater cohesiveness and effectiveness in the Directorate.

Our Solution

We chose to conduct two teambuilding events *simultaneously*: one in Ireland and one in Belgium. A team of 10 facilitators was trained for the event. Similar workshops were conducted in French and in English at these two sites, using the same tailor-made simulations. The simulations provided the context for follow-up discussion and workshops focusing on issues of specific relevance to SANCO’s effectiveness. All work groups discussed list of Dos and Don’ts. Each team also produced metaphors for a vision. The participants had the opportunity to have some real “fun” together. The atmosphere was relaxed and pleasant.

Impact

Strikingly similar conclusions were drawn in the various work groups. A lot of learning and exchange took place. This event was clearly a step toward greater trust and mutual understanding.



C. Strategic Planning

Client Request

The Management Team of **DG OIL in Luxembourg** needed guidelines to reinforce the identity of the organisation and improve the quality of their services. In October 2005, S&N facilitated several strategic workshops to develop and deploy a Strategic Plan for the organisation. At that time, the Management Team (all grade A level) was excited and involved in making this project successful. Each member of the team was ready to support and contribute to transforming DG OIL into a more professional, service-oriented organisation.

Our Solution

During the first workshop, S&N guided the Management Team (MT) to define a clear vision and mission statement of the organisation. Also, the MT identified the relevant stakeholders and the range of services offered by DG OIL. Both the strategic alliances and objectives were further developed. In January 2006, just after the announcement of the new DG OIL organisation, each Unit (OIL1 to OIL6) had the opportunity to participate in a one-day strategic workshop. The objectives of that workshop were to facilitate and enhance the “buy-in” of the strategy by each civil servant in the DG OIL organisation, as well as to reinforce the role of the Management.

Impact

The first impact of the Strategic Plan was a clearly strengthened identity of the organisation, enabling the Management Team to better align the organisation to the new vision and mission statement. A second impact was a better understanding of the strategy and the organisational objectives at all levels in the organisation. And as third benefit, there was greater awareness on mutual responsibilities among all staff, acknowledging that everyone’s input is crucial to the delivery of top-quality services.

2. Standard Training courses

The following courses were designed and facilitated by trainers from Schouten & Nelissen using material developed especially for the Commission. These were 2-day training courses, available in both French and English.



Customer Service

All Commission staff should have high quality customer service to EU citizens as a primary concern, in order to ensure that the Commission meets its obligations under the Treaties. In this respect, a course on Customer Service was offered.

Chairing and conducting meetings

This course is designed for all staff that are, or will be, chairing internal meetings (meetings with other EC staff) and how to do this in an effective and efficient way. The main subjects covered include: different meeting procedures e.g. brainstorming, thinking hats of De Bono, phasing incident method, different decision-making procedures e.g. decision matrix, delegation, dealing with pitfalls, establishing an agenda, opening the meeting, correcting minutes, follow-up the meeting.



Introduction to project management

This course is primarily for officials who have little or no experience in project management and who are called upon to manage or evaluate projects. It is designed to provide participants with the basic skills necessary for project management, tailored to their particular needs. The main subjects covered include: definition and scope of projects, project specifications, translation of objectives into flow charts and task breakdown charts, forming a team, assignment of tasks and roles, delegation and monitoring of responsibilities, drawing up a budget, drawing up a preliminary timetable and follow-up techniques, evaluation of a project, measuring success.



Delivery of results

This course helps staff to organize their own job effectively and efficiently, to learn from experience and consequently identify possibilities for improvement. The main subjects covered include: design a customer oriented, functional specification of a job, organize a job to satisfy requirements, handle unexpected or unavoidable circumstances and learn from them, develop a service and process quality information system and evaluate the outcome, discuss and agree standards in a balanced exchange of results promised and means made available, take the initiative to create opportunities to reflect, learn and start improvements. This will lead to the development of a result oriented job management system and plan. This course is under construction and will be available in mid 2005

Problem solving

This course is designed to provide the participants with tools for task-related problem solving. Participants get the opportunity to learn how to recognise problems at an early stage and how to solve those problems in a methodological way. The main subjects covered include: problem selecting methods, feasibility study, problem definition, formulation and selection of causes, design of solutions, action plan, assurance and evaluation. The course methodology involves short theoretical presentations, brainstorming, interactive group dialogue, working in sub groups and exercises.

S&N International, P.O. Box 266
5300 AG Zaltbommel, The Netherlands
T: +31 418 688 666,
M: international@sn.nl