

Accelerating Collaboration through Workplace Culture

Challenge

Samo and Iza Login established Outfit7 in 2010. This software developer was founded with a mission to “bring fun and entertainment to all.” To support this mission, Samo and Iza consciously created a workplace culture of characterized by fun, respect, and collaboration. In June 2010, Outfit7 launched Talking Tom, a smartphone app featuring an interactive animated cat that repeats everything a user says. Talking Tom was an immediate hit, achieving a record 300 million downloads within 19 months.

By early 2013, with the success of Talking Tom and the rest of the “Talking Friends” franchise, Outfit7 had grown from its original 8 employees to 45 employees scattered across offices in Cyprus, England, Slovenia, South Korea, and the United States. This growth, though undeniably exciting, also strained the young company’s cultural foundations. With more expansion on the horizon, Samo and Iza were worried about losing the special culture that had created their success in the first place. Despite intuitively knowing what they wanted internal company dynamics to look like, the pair struggled to articulate it in a way that would allow them to effectively scale.

Solution

As they grappled with this challenge, Samo and Iza came across Arbinger’s Leadership and Self-Deception. The book convinced

them that Arbinger's framework could foster the workplace culture they were seeking.

Outfit7 brought in an Arbinger facilitator to conduct a two-day workshop with its leadership team. Many members of the team were initially skeptical about the need to work differently. However, the session helped them realize ways that an inward mindset was contributing to the growing cracks within the company culture. During the workshop, several team members were able to resolve lingering disagreements, thereby laying the groundwork for more collaborative work going forward.

The team was enthusiastic about the results of the initial workshop and wanted to ensure they could successfully embed an outward mindset in their day-to-day work. They also wanted to spread this way of working throughout the company. An Arbinger facilitator returned two months after the initial workshop to lead the team through a series of half-day implementation training sessions. These sessions provided team members with tools for planning, executing, and evaluating their work. The widespread adoption of these tools helped to institutionalize an outward mindset approach and make its implementation more tangible and sustainable.

In addition, Arbinger trained five members of the leadership team to be internal facilitators. These internal facilitators were equipped to support fellow leadership team members and to train the rest of the company's employees, helping them work with heightened levels of collaboration and accountability.

Each of Outift7's 200 employees participated in Arbinger's workshops and implementation training. Outfit 7's own internal facilitators have trained over 90% of these employees.

Results

Outfit7's leaders report having an increased capacity to listen to one another more objectively. They are more willing to reevaluate their perceptions and conclusions, which allows them to see issues differently, overcome their differences with each other, and focus on results.

According to Iza, Outfit7 employees previously tended to focus solely on their own tasks and didn't think about how their work was affecting others. However, after working with Arbinger to establish an outward mindset, employees across the company regularly look for opportunities to help their colleagues.

Rok Zorko is a case in point. Outfit7's Vice President of Product dDevelopment described how he used to brush off what he deemed as "obscure requests coming from obscure departments." He assumed that whatever he was doing had to be more important than what others were asking of him. Now, Rok says, "I don't see it that way anymore. I recognize that these people obviously want to get something done—something valuable for the company. Maybe it's not as important as I think my work is, but it's obviously important to them so I'll go the extra mile—I'll do it. The time that I was previously using to get upset about it is usually the time that it takes to get it done."

Outfit7's employees are also discovering that when they help their colleagues, their colleagues are more likely to help them in return. As a result, the company has developed a workplace culture in which people are not afraid to ask for help. According to Iza, "People are more effective and people are more responsible. What we have learned through Arbinger is good for them as well as for the company." This was echoed by Igor Lautar, Vice President of Technology, who believes that the company is achieving results more efficiently than ever

before.

This accelerated collaboration has allowed Outfit7 to strengthen its workplace culture even as its workforce has more than doubled since Arbinger started working with the company. The business results have been spectacular. By October 2015, 2.5 years after the organization started applying the Arbinger approach, Outfit7's Talking Friends had generated over 3 billion app downloads, were attracting more than 250 million active users each month and were generating more than 3.5 billion views of its videos on YouTube. Outfit7 believes this change in how they work is permanent. As Rok says about the Arbinger approach, "Once you have this knowledge, you can't 'unthink' it."

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Iza Login – Cofounder & Deputy CEO | Outfit7