

JOE CM LEE RECEIVES THE WIAL LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD 2015

At the 2015 WIAL Global Forum, Joe CM Lee, VP of MSI Computer (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., received the "Leadership Excellence Award" for his vision and success in using Action Learning to transform the company.

Micro-Star International Co., Ltd (MSI, TWSE: 2377) is a Taiwanese multinational information technology corporation headquartered in New Taipei City, Taiwan. It designs, develops and provides computer hardware, related products and services. MSI Computer (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., established in 2000, is the main production site of the MSI group. The main products of this 200,000 m² and 6000 employees plant include motherboards, graphic cards, all-in-one PCs, barebone computers, servers, IPCs, multimedia peripherals in-vehicle infotainment solutions, smart cleaning robots, panoramic Wi-Fi cameras, etc.



MSI Shenzhen first learned about AL in 2010 when Wayne Chien, the HR A.V.P of MSI, introduced AL methodology to assist with a single problem it was facing. In late 2012, when management and leadership issues appeared, they started a process that brought AL deeply into the organizational culture.

Joe CM Lee, VP of MSI (Shenzhen) and the Plant General Manager, championed the adoption of AL and became the role model of AL in the organization. He says, "Before AL, we were facing continuous product differentiation, and uncertainty and complexity in projecting future business trends. To operate effectively, we needed a lot of high-level communication and to recognize the uncertainty in our future business development."

"The company was dealing with conflict at many levels -- cross-functional, cross-departmental and individual. This greatly affected the business objectives and

outcomes. Before AL was introduced, the co-founder noticed that when managers received instructions, they had a lot of questions, many different ideas, different selection approaches, and different value systems. Managers sometimes were even not willing to support his decisions. Clearly, this way was no longer working for us."

Joe believes that members being asked to work on an objective must be allowed to show their personal thoughts, be allowed into open communication, develop real mutual understanding, and only then they can reach a final consensus ready to act on. These are necessary to remove roadblocks and develop the team's potential. "Action learning has now become our key tool-set for inter-departmental communication and project management. It functions not only to help resolve problems, but more importantly, during problem-solving the team re-shapes itself and each individual develops an intangible and necessary self-empowering ability. I am honored to have participated in this turning point in our business. And, truth be known, the change in me that is the most valuable is shown in my personal life: I am a better father and husband."



The management team reflects periodically on the process which has now been going over 2-years. The impact on the organization of having Joe as an early adopter was pivotal. They tell the story of his personal transformation. "In the beginning, Joe was in the first group trained in AL. We prioritized listening first. Each time Joe asked a question it was a challenge to watch him. It seemed to be physical challenging for this deeply knowledgeable person, used to simply telling people what they need to know, to go through the contortions necessary to express himself using questions. Now, questions are his natural form of communication. People love to talk with Joe because he helps them to think deeply and thoroughly. For Joe, it was at first a quantitative change which then became a qualitative change. It's so striking - if Joe can do it, anyone can do it. It's clear to everyone that without Joe's personal transformation he demonstrated so clearly, the company-wide program would never

succeed.

Late 2012, MSI invited Paulina Chu (SALC) to help with self-assessment and determine opportunities for using AL in a culture change process. This organically, step-by-step, developed into a 3-year, 3-stage process that has shifted deep cultural assumptions in the organization, and with these the company is being run differently and the upcoming generation of managers have a very different set of values than a short 3 years ago. For the past three years, 6 CALCs participated in the MSI culture changing process. Key steps MSI (Shenzhen) went through were:

- **"Soil-Cultivating"**. Including diagnosing behavioral problems, and clarification of vision and values. At the leadership level, work with mindset, leadership essential program and assessing "The issues we are facing" and "The potential of AL" in 3 stages for 3 levels of managers.

- **Stage One - Experimental Stage**. 12 top-level managers (4-day course, June & August 2013) and decision to implement AL company-wide. 6 of the 12 volunteered to lead the next stage.

- **Stage Two - Official Internalization Stage**. 40 people involved. (4-day course, January & February 2014 and a 5-month "Leaders Build Leaders" project working on 1 problem of their choice per month).

The group reported that they learned many specific skills which they could apply to work and life.

- **Stage Three - Expand the Learning Stage**. Here, AL really proved valuable with the 3 original cultural issues the organization had initially identified.

A program review took place in July 2015. Interviews with 14 1st line managers confirmed that all recognized a shift to facilitative and coaching leadership in a short time. Interdepartmental communication is stronger, and teamwork has shown up throughout the company where it didn't exist at the outset of this program. There is a change from "performance-driven management decisions" (when under pressure,



an early move would be to cut people) to “a priority of growing people as the key asset”. Managers describe the benefits as better teamwork; drawing on collective wisdom by integrating diversified ideas; putting oneself in someone else’s shoes; effectively helping other co-workers and a big improvement in the overall team harmony. Joe illustrates the company-wide impact of the change: “The employee satisfaction rate went from 58 to 78 !”

Seeing these tremendous changes in mindset and leadership style from top leadership team to the middle management level, MSI plans to extend the program to 150 frontline managers. It is believed that once this stage completed, a concrete solid ‘AL’ business culture will become MSI International’s competitive advantage in the VUCA World.

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