

THE GAINS THAT ELETROBRAS IS MAKING WITH ACTION LEARNING

Eletrobras, the largest electricity company in Latin America has been using the Action Learning methodology with the support WIAL-Brazil since 2013.

Until now, Eletrobras has carried out 12 Action Learning sessions to solve a diverse set of problems. Alberto Wajzenberg, manager of the company's Department of Organization Development, explains that the methodology is used in the "context of continuous improvement, in order to identify and analyze problems, whilst at the same time promoting behavioral and development changes in people."

The Action Learning methodology fits perfectly with the company's search for operational excellence. Wajzenberg states that "with this aim, Eletrobras has been developing initiatives to implement management processes with a special emphasis on continuous improvement. In that regard, our practices are based on LEAN OFFICE. In this context, learning plays a key role, serving as the basis of the improvement cycle, or Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA). In order to meet the objectives, it is necessary not only to use improvement techniques, but also to change the behavior of those involved and especially to promote collaborative reflection and learning."

The executive explains that Action Learning was adopted as it is a structured problem solving methodology which does not demand great learning efforts and has practical application. "Whether through sessions, or by developing the ability to ask questions, its collaborative nature, which allows for open discussion with a multidisciplinary group of people involved with a problem, giving them the opportunity to address problems with greater collaboration, stimulation and a systemic perspectives."



He affirms that, "in the specific case of LEAN, the importance of collaborative work is highlighted, that of dialog, learning and above all the role of leadership for success. "With Action Learning, in association with other scientific theory-based techniques, the treatment of human aspects associated to the solution of problems is easier."

For Wajzenberg, the principle challenge of using Action Learning in a continual improvement context is the definition of how it lends itself to the integration with other techniques. "We use essentially two steps of the Action Learning methodology. We use it early on in a meeting, when we need to quickly obtain understanding of the problem and its principle causes, which allows us to produce an action plan with short and long term activities. We also employ the methodology when, after completing the definition of the action plan, we need to stimulate reflection, especially leadership. The impact such actions will have on the organization and, with it, the behavior and attitude of those involved for effective problem solving".

In accordance with the manager, after each Action Learning session, we develop The Current Reality Tree (CRT), a tool from the Theory of Constraints (TOC), to help in the understanding of the problem and its causes, which produces a one page report, a tool from LEAN. Eletrobras also uses the principles of Action Learning for specialist team development in process management, usually made up of 5 people, with collaborative work profiles and specialization in improvement techniques, management of organizational change and the use of their own Action Learning.



The main results of this practice in Eletrobras, Wajzenberg highlights are: time-saving for identifying and analyzing problems, changes in behavior of those involved and a greater capacity for reflection and learning, from the formulation of the questions.

"Action Learning has proven very useful in the development of our people, since it facilitates behavior change often associated with the success of various initiatives of Eletrobras. Moreover, it has been especially valuable as a technique for identifying and analyzing problems," concludes the manager.

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