

Case Study Team Syntegrity

The Client:
The DKC Group

The Problem/ The Challenge

Between 1999 and 2002, Douglas K. Clarke Insurance, a Tier 3 family-run insurance brokerage, acquired five other small brokerages to become the DKC Group. Through acquisition, the company suddenly had the size and revenue potential to make the leap to a Tier 2 brokerage. However, a tough market, a diverse and poorly understood customer set, and a geographically distributed management team that hardly knew each other stood as barriers to the development of a whole that would be greater than the sum of its parts.

The Syntegration

Damon Clarke, the President of DKC Group, sought to build an aligned team with a common vision, and to develop an action plan that would move the newly formed group toward its envisioned VIP Tier 2 status. In October 2002, he invited a cross-functional group of 14 people from across the merged companies and 5 leaders from partner Insurance Companies, to participate in a Syntegration to answer the question:

"What must DKC Group do in order to grow from a Tier 3 brokerage into a viable VIP Tier 2 brokerage, while retaining control of the firm?"

Participants included Owners, Managers, Producers, CSRs, and Office Staff from the DKC Group, and Senior Management from ING, Economical, and The Citadel. Together, the participants discussed and deliberated topics that included: Customer Satisfaction and Retention Strategy, Customer Targeting and Segmentation, Market Selection, Product Focus, Effective Partnership Between Brokerage and Insurance Companies, DKC Group Branding, Financial Incentives, Professional Development, Company Capital, Employee Satisfaction, Producers, and Organizational Structure.

Results

- The DKC Group and its partner insurance companies reached a shared understanding, common vocabulary, and mutual respect that was previously absent in their working relationships.
- The group committed to actions and timelines to develop: A new customer targeting, segmentation, and retention strategy; a VIP customer program; a branding strategy; a compensation model; a professional development program; an organizational structure with role definitions; and a communication plan for all of these initiatives.

- The group achieved "breakthroughs" on how the role of Producer must change, on how they identify, attract, and retain VIP customers as well as attain VIP status with the insurance companies, and how they can attract, develop and retain employees and partners who will transform DKC.

Statements of Participants

- "Great planning concept and tool. I commend your facilitators in that they never allowed the participants to feel uncomfortable or threatened by it ."
- "A much needed human capital injection into our organization. Buy in and ownership of the resolution/directives is exceptional. "
- "The concepts and implementation were very professionally executed. Would not hesitate to recommend."