

Sustainability Implementation

Nadine Exter, Cognisus: www.cogni-sus.com

Context:

Over a period of just over a year, we partnered with a large multinational (70,000 employees worldwide) on a ZeroWaste programme, acting as Guides on the Side to advise them on better implementation of their sustainability approach.

What the client needed:

The client was over a year into their ZeroWaste programme but had been struggling to achieve targets and engage employees into the new approach. They needed to understand how to develop and manage an approach that was more suitable to their context and culture.

For example, as a global MNE they needed to engage their divisions in large territories such as the US and China to the ZeroWaste programme. However, to date progress to do this had been slow. Feedback reflected that the European approach the central team had been advocating was not seen as relevant within the territories. Working with the central and local teams we identified a more suitable approach – GLocal; a global approach and parameters and support but local freedom to adapt into the relevance of their market. This also allowed entrepreneurship and ownership, a key cultural value within the organisation.

One of the work streams was advising on how the central sustainability team could engage employees over 10 different locations (from China to US, Brazil, India and Europe) to the ZeroWaste programme

Our approach:

We focused on:

1. Identifying existing levels of engagement, including identity, brand messaging, and motivation – especially relevant because of differences in internal brand and engagement between long established home country (in Europe) and newer countries such as China and India (with higher staff churn, still developing the brand identity and with different motivations for employees joining the organisation). The team then identified how ZeroWaste was relevant and could contribute to those engagement levels (the business case as well as specific engagement tactics and platforms).
2. Finding existing opportunities and platforms for communications, and suggesting which were relevant for different departments across the business. It is important to understand the nuances of this for a global MNE, with differences in ability and reach for communicating in factories vs. retail outlets vs offices. Recommendations were also made for new opportunities that could be developed
3. Developing priority messaging, both strategic (establishing the ZeroWaste messaging) and tactical (what actions and change were needed and what activities, data and impacts motivated which groups of employees).
4. We then developed a traffic light system which monitored the ongoing progression of the engagement campaign, advising on successes and corrections needed over the year

Impact:

This was well received by the sustainability team, especially the US offices who were at the early stages of planning how to roll out the ZeroWaste programme.