

stanton
marris





"It used to be that organisations had people who were good at strategy and people who were good at getting things done - execution. The new area that has opened up is in the middle - how to execute."

Adam Crozier, Chief Executive, Royal Mail



Between developing strategy and its successful execution lies a high-risk territory where things can go wrong, off track or just get bogged down. We've all seen what happens when:

- leaders who don't fully support the strategy quietly subvert it
- managers don't see the benefit of new ideas, so they resist what feels like extra work
- people aren't fully engaged, so don't give their full commitment.

This everyday friction derails the execution of even the best strategies.

To head off these risks and realise your ambitions, you need to understand and tackle what happens here. Investment at this early stage means you don't waste time, effort and resource struggling to fix the impact of the human factor later on.

Stanton Marris combines strategy and people expertise in a completely different kind of consultancy – the only one of its kind focused purely on making strategy work.

By working with the politics, personalities, behaviours and processes, breaking down barriers and making the most of what's going well, we help clear the path to results.

We're ambitious for our clients. Understanding your business is the first step to connecting your goals with our knowledge of how teams and individuals operate. Working alongside your internal teams allows us to share expertise and transfer skills in leadership, organisation performance and engagement, to help you get the results you want.

Our aim is always to strengthen the capability of your business to deliver, not just this strategy, but the next one. Making strategy work means making performance sustainable.

Results that last

Our clients tell us that it's how we work with them that makes the difference and delivers lasting value.

We get beneath the surface and find the business need behind the immediate challenge. To understand what's really going on, analysis is vital, but must be combined with experience and judgement. Human behaviour and the unofficial issues can be the toughest stuff; we're willing to offer challenge where it's needed.

The other side of the story is finding and amplifying what is working well. What drives high performance in your particular business? Knowing this allows us to go with the grain to focus the energy and get it flowing in the right direction.

That means working closely for an exact fit with your business, making sure you get the most out of existing resource. Our work is completely transparent, standing alongside you to transfer skills into your business.

83% of our clients come back to us for follow-on work

Impact where it counts

Evidence from high-performing businesses show that they pay attention to three areas in which we have particular expertise:

- Leadership – what leadership is for in your particular business
- Organisation performance – structures, culture, values, and processes
- Engagement – understanding your personal contribution to the strategy and feel committed to its success

Depending on the context and the challenge, our expertise in these three fields is combined in different ways to help make strategy work, as these client stories illustrate.

“They got on board with our ambition, really worked hard to understand what makes our guys tick and what the customer was looking for, and delivered a high quality improvement programme that pushed us to meet the challenge.”

Peter Anderson, Managing Director,
Balfour Beatty Rail Infrastructure Services



Balfour Beatty Rail

The challenge

Balfour Beatty's Rail Services division in the UK (BBRS) is largely dependent on maintaining a strong and successful relationship with its primary customer, Network Rail. Business success is achieved through delivering a responsive and high quality, focused service at the right price. In 2007 Network Rail decided to reduce the number of its chosen suppliers from six to four, based on them satisfying a rigorous set of technical and behavioural assessment criteria.

The new MD of BBRS, Peter Anderson, recognised the risk. “I knew we had the experience, technical capability and resources to deliver, but I saw we had work to do to help all our people understand that improved customer relationships would probably be the key differentiator in deciding whether or not we would be successful. That's why we went to Stanton Marris,” says Anderson.

The key to success was the attitudes of people who work directly alongside Network Rail. We had to find new ways to help them see clearly how they were perceived and how their individual behaviour impacts on the overall reputation of Balfour Beatty. A real shift was needed, as many long-serving employees took these relationships for granted.

The approach

As impartial outsiders, we were able to engage key people at Network Rail in honest and open discussions about what was important to them in the client/contractor relationship. We shared this feedback at a series of high-impact workshops with the top 50 project planners and managers at BBRS, giving them the opportunity to see for the first time the key role that behavior plays in building trusting, collaborative partnerships.

Having ‘held up the mirror’ - using actors to enact real situations described by the customer - BBRS key managers quickly saw the value and benefits of developing new behaviours and relationship skills.

This was reinforced by selective voluntary individual coaching to make sure that the new behaviours and skills were well embedded.

The results

A follow-up customer attitude survey six weeks later showed the immediate and positive impact of new behaviours and ways of working.

The investment paid off when BBRS learned that they had retained their valued contract with Network Rail. Peter Anderson acknowledges the behavioural improvement programme as central to their success:

“There is no doubt that Stanton Marris played a key role in helping us to win the contract which has secured our future as a leading rail company dedicated to delivering service excellence.”

These performance standards need to be sustained and continually improved. Stanton Marris has since helped BBRS to crystallise the new behaviours into a clear set of working principles, being used to help clarify expectations in delivering quality and efficiency in a customer-focused business.

4,000⁺ team leaders inspired and motivated to lead change in clients; and in the same year

43,000⁺ employees – engaged by internal facilitators trained by Stanton Marris

“Stanton Marris mesh together the strategic and the tactical; they combine intellectual rigour with the ability to take abstract theory and make it clear, visual, consistent and business relevant. They make it come alive and make it happen.” Lisa Attenborough, Group Head of Communications, Mondi plc



Mondi Group

The challenge

Mondi’s mission is to be the best performing paper and packaging company in the world. Mondi, dual-listed in 2007 on the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges, has more than 35,000 people working in 130 sites in over 35 countries. It is a vertically integrated business, owning its own forestry assets, making pulp and manufacturing paper and packaging products that reach millions of consumers worldwide.

Mondi has expanded fast through acquisition, especially in emerging markets; it now has a clear strategic focus to achieve further growth through capitalising on the value of its assets whilst keeping costs under control.

Following a major reorganisation to streamline the businesses, the Chief Executive wanted to bring together 200 senior managers from across the different business divisions to help them understand the company's strategy and the role that they play in delivering this. As well as understanding the new expectations from shareholders, and exploring what more they could do together to grow profitably, and to make the mission feel real and achievable as a shared goal.

The approach

An online e-survey provided all the clues we needed to design the content, tone and style of the management conference as a strategic intervention. Integrating the strategic themes with the motivations, needs and concerns of the audience into a concise set of powerful messages provided the ‘leitmotif’ for the three day event.

Working closely with an internal client team and coaching each member of the Executive Leadership Team individually on their role and contribution, we carefully orchestrated each element of the conference. A dynamic mix of presentations, interactive sessions, group discussions, social and networking opportunities all underpinned the overriding theme of 'Together we achieve more', to produce a step change in both rational understanding and emotional commitment to the overall strategy.

The results

Everyone present felt genuine pride and passion about being part of the bigger Mondi and increased confidence in their capability to succeed. A follow-up survey revealed unprecedented levels of commitment. One typical comment from a participant was: "Very energising conference – highly motivating – couldn't wait to take it back into the business!"

David Hathorn, Chief Executive, commented: "The professionalism got everyone on side. People are proud to be part of something like that. Had we not got that right we'd have been 30-40% off the pace in terms of getting the results we did."

Mondi managers now feel they have the knowledge, tools and support - and accountability – to deliver the strategy in their part of the business. An ongoing programme of engagement, communication and development activities under the banner of 'Together we achieve more' is now being implemented to help maintain the momentum started at the conference to harness the skills, experience and talent across Mondi in pursuit of their mission.

33%

improvement in commitment to
Mondi's new strategy following
our strategy engagement support

“Unlike some consultancies, Stanton Marris have always focussed on us as a client in the round, not just on the project. They are creative, thought-provoking and very high quality. They have really delivered in terms of helping to make our strategy work.”
Judith Hardy, HR Director, Addleshaw Goddard



Addleshaw Goddard

The challenge

Addleshaw Goddard is a major UK law firm. The result of a merger between leading Northern and City firms, the success of the integration was recognised when the firm won two prestigious awards: *Legal Week's* 'UK Firm of the Year' and *The Lawyer's* 'Management Team of the Year'. The firm has over 1,450 staff across three offices in London, Leeds and Manchester, and revenues of £195m.

The firm's ambition is to be 'identifiably different'. 'Working with us is great fun,' they say. 'We do things your way, not ours.'

The approach

Stanton Marris have been helping them to achieve this in two ways: by developing the culture to make this a reality; and by designing a programme for partner development which supports and challenges the leadership of the firm to achieve this ambition.

Developing the culture started by developing a set of guiding principles to help the firm to:

- set common standards by providing a model for decision-making and behaviour
- inspire pride and confidence
- positively assert its distinctive identity.

This became known as the 'AG Way'. We then designed a process to make sure that everyone in the firm understood what the AG Way means in practice, in the workplace on a day-to-day level.

How we worked was as important as what we did. We worked alongside partners and other senior directors, helping them find answers that were tailored to both the business need and individual aspirations. We worked with the highly rational, analytical style of lawyers and complemented it by tapping into and channelling the emotional energy and ambition they have for themselves, their clients and their people. We matched that ambition ourselves, aiming for world-class standards to raise their sights about what can be achieved. We were determined these principles would be 'lived, not laminated'. Partners themselves led the programme which involved more than 1,000 people (over 80% of the firm).

The results

The AG Way has become the cornerstone of a culture which has proved its increasing value to the firm. Following its launch, the firm was ranked in *The Sunday Times* '100 Best Companies To Work For'; in every subsequent year it has risen up the list. On the internet message board for this year's award, a prospective trainee writes, "I know it's all about the AG Way."

The development programme has had a similar impact. Through a series of conversations across the firm and with their clients, we have placed development squarely in the context of the firm's ambition.

The challenge was to enable each partner's development to suit individual motivations and needs within this wider perspective. The result has been a future-orientated, lifelong programme unlike any other professional service firm's. It harnesses the ambition of the Partnership and focuses its energy in specific and powerful ways to achieve the firm's goals.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The challenge

How do you tackle the international trade in people trafficking? How do you meet the needs of a growing population without damaging the environment? These issues were amongst those at the heart of a ten-year strategy for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The FCO’s traditional structure was not designed for such cross-cutting challenges – it needed different ways of working and even a new structure.

The FCO’s then Director of the restructuring programme Danny Pruce says: “The challenges we were facing at that time had changed – that was a point at which our structure and business systems had changed little for years. What we needed was change from the foundations up of our deeply traditional organisation, a challenge that would have fazed even the most ambitious.”

The approach

The Stanton Marris team guided the FCO through a restructure around a set of strategic priorities, which had just been developed. Under David Miliband these have been superseded by a new strategic framework, strongly focused on policy and service delivery, but based largely around those original strategic priorities:

- to minimise the threat to international and domestic security posed by weapons of mass destruction and terrorism
- to minimise other threats to the UK, such as uncontrolled migration transnational crime and extremism in the Islamic world
- to maintain a stable international system based on the UN, the rule of law and multilateral co-operation
- to promote UK economic interests in an open and expanding global economy
- to promote democracy, good governance and development
- to bolster the security of British and global energy supplies
- and to build a strong European Union in a secure neighbourhood

Working with FCO staff, Stanton Marris proposed different structures, designed around the work that needed to be done. The FCO embraced the team's recommendations, which were to structure the London part of the organisation around the strategic priorities, as well as subsuming its other offices where possible under them. The team's recommendations that Director Generals should 'own' the strategic priorities and be held to account for delivering them, put the resources into the hands of those actually responsible for driving forwards the strategic priorities and was a powerful way of refocusing the energy.

More effective structures and systems were the next step. Stanton Marris consultants guided the FCO through practical implementation including design and set-up of a project team, and devising and actioning an internal communications strategy.

With the FCO's Board at that time, through individual coaching and facilitating awaydays, we worked on the behaviours required to lead the organisation. Working with finance, budgets were relocated, and Stanton Marris consultants helped to get people into the jobs created by the organisation redesign.

The FCO's Danny Pruce says: "Stanton Marris challenged us to be more ambitious and to focus on delivery, balancing this with offering reassurance from their experience of similar change in other organisations. We understood quickly that communications was a vital area for change, and one where we had to concentrate more of our attention."

100%

minimum return on investment agreed with a client for our work with their senior teams

The results

The FCO is now much better equipped to respond to its challenging remit in a complex world. It says that "Stanton Marris quickly 'got' our culture and by working with it, helped us to become a more nimble and responsive organisation. In many ways their approach is still the basis for how we do things now."

“Stanton Marris are very smart thinkers – they know whether something will work or not because they understand a company’s culture and work with it. They understand what makes your organisation tick.” Allison Young, Management Development Director, Pearson



As these stories show, what we do is as varied as the challenges businesses bring. But whether we are thinking through a high level re-design, coaching a chief executive or working hands-on with a team on the conference floor to make sure the event has strategic impact, our clients tell us that all our work has a recognisable Stanton Marris style. That’s because it’s all guided by our five core principles, developed over more than 20 years’ experience of what has lasting impact:

1. find the breakthroughs
2. intervene where it matters
3. connect everything to the purpose
4. strengthen capability
5. make it last.

No. 1 in the country – the national rating of Camden Council, one of our longest standing clients.

Our clients come to us for

Leadership

- leadership development
- top team facilitation
- executive coaching

Organisation performance

- culture change
- restructuring
- business transformation

Engagement

- talent management
- strategic communication
- engagement techniques



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