

Eastern Aero Marine Creates Alignment and Accountability to Drive Growth and Expansion

“Working with McGhee has shifted the way I lead this company. They helped us create alignment around a powerful strategic plan which is creating measurable business results.”

– Miriam Oroshnik, President & CEO
Eastern Aero Marine, Inc.

Customer Profile

Eastern Aero Marine, Inc. (EAM) is one of the largest suppliers of life vests and life rafts in the aviation industry.

Business Situation

Operating with an outdated strategic plan, EAM's leaders found themselves entrenched in the details of the business and spent inadequate time defining and executing strategy to achieve long-term results.

Solution

The Objective Accountability Program (OAP) provided EAM a system for identifying long-term goals with clear accountabilities. It enabled the leadership team to improve their communication, create clear values, and focus their time on the longer-term vision versus daily distractions.

Benefits

- Created a clear strategic plan that included a new mission, five-year goals, and a system for tracking progress
- Increased profits by 23%
- Launched two new products
- Opened two new divisions
- Decreased office hours
- Upgraded to Microsoft Outlook 2007

Eastern Aero Marine, Inc. (EAM) founded in 1952 is a leading manufacturer of inflatable safety gear and one of the largest suppliers of life vests and life rafts in the aviation industry. The company supplies commercial and general aviators, aircraft manufacturers, leasing agencies, mariners, and militaries worldwide. Their clients include leading aviation companies, such as Boeing, Airbus, Douglas Product Division, Cessna, Bombardier, Gulfstream, and Sikorsky.

The President and Chief Executive Officer at EAM wanted to update the company's strategic plan and create a vision that would inspire and ultimately increase profits and create a clear direction for future growth. Working with McGhee Productivity Solutions (McGhee), EAM shifted from a culture with an unclear mission and little accountability to a culture with a solid mission, clear goals, and a sustainable long-term plan.

Situation

Operating with an unclear and outdated strategic plan, key executives often found themselves preoccupied by the details of the business in lieu of moving new initiatives forward. The company's high-level goals lacked clear methods of measurement and accountability, which made it virtually impossible to track progress, cascade objective, or course correct. Additionally, communication among the leadership team was inconsistent because there was no common vision.


“We had no system of accountability; no tracking at all of objectives. There were goals but no clear way to assess results,” said CEO and President, Miriam Oroshnik.

At that time, the company had conceived but not yet launched two new business concepts which required clear direction from leadership to properly implement. The successful implementation of these new initiatives would have a positive financial impact on the company if executed effectively.

Solution

Miriam engaged McGhee Executive Consultant, Joe Hubbard, to guide EAM's senior leadership team through the Objective Accountability Program (OAP). Her primary goal was to develop a clear strategic plan and create alignment around a long-term vision that would inspire and produce measurable business results.

The OAP process, rolled out in four phases, utilizes McGhee's consulting, executive coaching, and facilitating services.



“My McGhee consultant is smart; he is my partner in business, a great listener, flexible in his approach and willing to meet people where they are.”

– Miriam Oroshnik, President & CEO
Eastern Aero Marine, Inc.

In Phase I, **Preparing the Leadership for Change**, McGhee worked with Miriam to map out the purpose and intended results of the program. Then each senior leader participated in one-to-one desk-side coaching and learned a system for managing their daily workflow using standard methods to organize information. This in turn helped them focus on the activities that directly related to the accomplishment of their most important objectives.

McGhee also created a customized assessment of their current strategic planning process to provide the senior leadership team with a snapshot of current company performance.

In Phase II, **The Strategic Team Plan (STP)**, McGhee facilitated a three-day off-site session with the leadership team where they reviewed the prior year, identified ‘lessons learned’, and created guidelines to ensure that those disappointments would not be carried into the future. This enabled more effective teaming, alignment, honesty, and communication between the leaders. Then McGhee and EAM’s leadership team developed a one-year Strategic Team Plan based on the organization’s three and five-year goals that inspired the leadership team to work in alignment towards a common goal.

In Phase III, **The Accountability Program (AP)**, the leadership team created a process to ensure individual and team accountability for the Strategic Team Plan. They created clear metrics, reports, and a process to measure their ongoing progress toward achieving their plan. A yearly accountability calendar was planned with meetings and events to support and monitor progress.

Finally, in Phase IV, **The Sustainability Plan (SP)**, the coaching program was continued and expanded to include a broader base of company leaders. McGhee also conducted training on how to cascade objectives throughout the organization to each individual contributor.

Benefits

EAM shifted from a culture with an unclear mission and little accountability to a culture with a focused mission, clear goals, and sustainable long-term plan.

Miriam says that she has a new sense of peace, renewed confidence to lead the company, and ownership for the process. In fact, EAM continues to use this process to generate results. During the second year of program implementation, the company expanded their business by adding two new divisions, increased profits by 23%, and made the decision to decrease office hours. Miriam’s advice to the business world, “Take the time to make sure your mission as well as your five, three, and one-year objectives are clear. Hold people accountable for results that align with your plan and course correct as you go. It’s okay to renegotiate!”

“We now have a clear strategic plan which has enabled us to launch two new products and achieve record sales.”

– Miriam Oroshnik, President & CEO
Eastern Aero Marine, Inc.

By applying McGhee methodologies, more than 100 executives, managers, and supervisors within EAM are now effectively tracking projects, managing priorities, delegating tasks, and managing their calendars. Team members work in alignment with company values to achieve their business objectives. Projects are managed with clearly defined metrics to measure results. Communication has increased and trust in leadership is evident.

Implementing SharePoint has allowed everyone access to accountability reviews and metrics for each project. Upgrading to Outlook 2007, ensures that everyone applying the same productivity principals using the same technology. Cascading this plan throughout EAM using Microsoft technology as the platform has created the infrastructure for sustained transformation.

This work has not only enabled the senior leadership team to create a clear and powerful strategic plan, it also created clear linkages between the strategy and the company infrastructure needed to accomplish the plan. To support EAM's strategic direction, the leaders have also made changes in the company's organizational structure, technical system, financial system, and inventory processes as a result of the OAP.

As a standard practice, McGhee collects both qualitative and quantitative data prior to and after the OAP to measure impact and return on investment. EAM had the following results:

Qualitative Results

- Implemented a system for cascading objectives and projects, resulting in alignment at all levels
- Created an environment that encourages work/life balance
- Created a strategic plan and system for tracking progress against the plan

Quantitative Results

- Increased profits by 23%
- Launched two new products with global distribution
- Opened two new divisions