

CASE STUDY

Sector: Mining

CCL Partners with Graymont to Align Leadership Culture with Global Strategy



About

An emerging global leader in the supply of lime and limestone products, Graymont serves major markets throughout the United States and Canada. As the second largest producer in North America, it has extended its reach into New Zealand. Professionally managed and family owned, the company has roots stretching back more than 65 years.

The Challenge

Graymont was working to successfully execute an ambitious strategy. The executive team recognized that they had to be intentional about shaping the culture and creating an organizational leadership capability. They needed a trusted partner to support them. Over the years, CCL had been delivering a custom individual leadership development program for Graymont. Given the relationship, CCL was the natural choice to work on this major initiative to support the transformation of Graymont.

The Solution

Facilitators play a powerful role when they can help individuals or groups discover for themselves their strengths and weaknesses. This is how CCL partnered with Graymont. “As opposed to a consulting company that might work with an organization and prescribe solutions based on their own data, CCL actually worked with Graymont so that they could create their own data, and build their own new reality,” said John McGuire, a change leadership expert and one of three individuals from CCL who worked with Graymont.

CCL started its work with the Discovery phase by guiding the Graymont strategic leadership team through a series of learning conversations. The goal was to help them to align on this new strategy and then to discover and define the elements required for successful execution from a culture and strategic capabilities perspective (among other areas). From this process, the team came away with a key realization: they wanted to pursue the new strategy but didn’t have a strong enough organizational leadership culture in place to succeed.

As a result, CCL provided tools on how to move a leadership culture from one stage (mostly independent) to another (more collaborative). It wasn’t enough to look at this theoretically. The team needed to actually apply new leadership practices to their own challenges before rolling out to the organization. Over several months, CCL’s experts attended Graymont leadership team meetings to observe how they addressed key business issues and then followed up by showing how different tools could be leveraged to live out the new culture while executing the strategy. Eventually, the leadership team was in sync and then could lead the cascade process. During a two-day conference, the Graymont strategic leadership team—with CCL’s guidance—shared their own learnings and taught the leadership tools to next level managers.

“The response was very positive,” said Rob Van Nus, VP Human Resources & Corporate Services. “This was ‘train the trainer.’ As a strategic leadership team, we had to lead by example. It provided credibility and showed that these materials weren’t going away as we were teaching the tools and had invested in them ourselves.”



The Impact

“The new strategy meant new ways of working,” said CCL’s Nick Petrie, Global Solutions Faculty, Americas.

“Previously, different plants all worked more independently. Now, there is more consistency and centralization across all operations as a result of decisions being made for the benefit of the company and not just the specific plant. This led to significant efficiency gains and increases in operational productivity.”

As a result, some of the key benefits for Graymont include:

- Good progress implementing the strategy and an increase in the value of the business.
- The capability to successfully execute complex transactions (divestitures, and domestic and international acquisitions).
- Improvement in environmental and safety performance.

“This in the midst of an enormously challenging business environment,” said Van Nus.

At the leadership team level, there were numerous breakthroughs. Case in point, for many years the leadership team had strong differing views about how many and which strategic issues to prioritize. With CCL’s support, the team came to agreement on how to proceed once they understood they were dealing with a polarity. Many within the team were pleased as this lingering dilemma had once seemed insurmountable.

“The whole experience has given us leadership muscle to do things we didn’t think were possible,” concluded Van Nus. “CCL has been a part of this success by helping us build leadership capabilities to take advantage of opportunities and create value for the shareholders.”

