

## Case Study

# REJUVENATING DREAM TEAM

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**A** LARGE HR consulting firm had suddenly started experiencing a number of problems within their team of consultants. Conflict was rife and meetings were considered to be a waste of time, as they often degenerated into arguments. The history behind this unfortunate development was pretty short.

When the Company was started all founding consultants were highly qualified in their field of expertise and had proven ability. Individually they had worked with a variety of companies, many of them international. This team had been formed to work on providing HR Solutions to a clutch of Top Notch IT and ITES companies serving Fortune 500 Companies.

In all, there were 25 consultants involved, some full time and some part time. The Promoter and Chief Operating Officer, of the firm Mr. Sanjay Doodrajka was an IT entrepreneur who had also run an ITES company in the past and had a great passion for Human Resource Development activities.

As he found himself getting increasingly busier with other pursuits, he did two things. One to establish the longterm objectives and strategic vision of the company he invited his long time friend a leading HR Thinker and Strategist, Mr. Samvrit Goshal, to join the board of Dream Team, Samvrit was also expected to contribute references for growing the business of Dream Team. Second thing that he did was to invite Ms. Richa Kapoor who had the experience of having worked as a founding team member of a number of organizations to help in re-engineering the processes with in Dream Team to support the sudden growth in business, Ms Kapoor was appointed as a Senior Consultant.

Soon after these developments the trouble began to show. While the performance bar on all consultant was raised by the structure of business proposed by Samvrit they became increasingly disapproving of Ms. Kapoor who was earnestly trying to build the processes on the guidelines of Samvrit to support the business structure.

Most consultants have a ruse that since Ms. Kapoor was not from their industry, hence according to them her advice on processes was impractical. In spite of the best efforts of the management to make a success of this re-engineering exercise, for 2 full quarter nothing could be achieved. Further the declining performance of all consultants and continuous disapproving feedback about Mr. Kapoor made Samvrit rethink the whole process and staffing.

Soon on his advice Sanjay appointed a Chief Consultant Mr. Anirudh Ganguly keeping in mind his long track record in similar business, to run the operations of dream team. Immediately after joining, Anirudh undertook a careful study of the organization of Dream team.

He found that Dream Team's Core Business was going through enormous changes, all demanding a ramp-up of scale and improvement of customer service which was the center thought of all that Ms. Kapoor had proposed. All Dream Team's customer had Tripled their hiring targets and outsource research and training to the Dream Team.

Dream Team had been further asked to facilitate this growth of its customers by implementing new training

schemes, new recruitment strategies, and improved logistics. The aim was to provide a streamlined organization, which could compete internationally.

At the beginning of the new contracts the Chief Consultant and the team were all very enthusiastic. Between them they had the technical knowledge required to see the clients through the changes quickly and effectively. Initially they had several meetings but once the areas of responsibility had been decided, the meetings ceased to be a regular occurrence. From this point on, the information flow was poor. Occasionally meetings were called but they were usually very frustrating and ineffective. Some consultants would dominate the meeting and then leave when they had made their point while others would arrive late and unprepared. Some never bothered to attend, including the project manager who always had something more important to do. Others complained that they were not listened to.

For a while they managed to survive their declining performance. Slowly though, minor problems began to arise. However, quick thinking and action usually averted any potential disasters.

Four months into the project the first major problem arose, when two of the consultants began running in-house training programmes for the clients. One of the participants had gone through the full training programme and had enjoyed it tremendously. On the assessment paper she had written, "What a pity we couldn't have had this training before. We won't get to practice our skills now."

The consultants had spent hours on these training programmes and were delighted with the results but this comment was unexpected. They decided not to question the manager of this regional office but to wait until they returned home when they could speak to the Chief Consultant. He had no idea of what was going on as he was busy preparing another important tender. He advised them to speak to one of their colleagues whom he thought was responsible for that area.

They spoke to the person responsible for organizational restructure, Ms. Kapoor and discovered that she had recommended changes in the regional servicing strategy. She confirmed that many of the clients' branches had been scheduled for closure within the next few months and this particular branch was one of them. Needless to say they were devastated that they had wasted their time training people who would either be redeployed or made redundant. On learning about this the Chief Consultant was unconcerned. "We will find a way of passing on our costs to the client. Don't worry about it." he said.

This led to a showdown between these consultant and the Chief Consultant Mr. Anirudh, and a center point of debate became the prudence of Ms. Kapoor's recommendation of closure. Since Anirudh was relatively new to the scene he promptly acted promised to review the restructuring exercise. This now found Ms. Kapoor without a shared portfolio and since he has also been feeling very frustrated at the lack of cooperation from other consultants she promptly put in her papers.

This brought Sanjay back to the scene who did not want to lose the expertise and commitment of Ms. Kapoor and hence introduced an innovation—giving Ms. Kapoor the charge of new IT contracts and the challenge to build this practice up from scratch. Ms. Kapoor accepted the challenge and soon to every one surprise dream team's IT Clients portfolio which was non-existent when Ms. Kapoor was given charge – was boasting of as many as 30 Clients in space of 2 quarters. Ms. Kapoor has taken the pains to build and train a team that was able to function independently and she soon found herself redundant to operation and took over a business development role as well. This new found IT Practise revenues far exceeded everyone's expectations and by the end of Quarter 2 were only 10% behind the ITES practice where the other 24 Consultants were employed! This also established beyond doubt all that Ms. Kapoor had proposed was relevant and extremely workable. With return of boom in IT sector all new business coming Dream Team's way now was IT related and Dream Team was now increasingly recognized as a Leading HR Consulting Company specializing in solutions for IT industry!

This surprised and shocked Anirudh and Samvrit as well. While for Sanjay it brought a smile to his face, but it left him wondering how he could take a second shot at putting Ms. Kapoor expertise to correct the declining business of Dream Team's ITES portfolio. Also whether Ms. Kapoor will be willing to take a second chance at it, or whether he should give Ms. Kapoor the next challenge to build the Financial Service sector portfolio from scratch.