



IN LATE MAY 2011, FIVE EXECUTIVES FROM THE REDHEAD FAMILY CORPORATION TRAVELED TO SWITZERLAND TO TAKE PART IN THE IMD ADVANCED HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TAUGHT BY GEORGE KOHLRIESER, A SPECIALIST IN HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS WITH 30 YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT THE IMD.

VLADISLAV BURDA, SERGEI BARANNIK, VYACHESLAV BICH, SERGEI FILYANIN AND VADIM ORLOV ATTENDED THE INTENSIVE FOUR-DAY PROGRAM ALONG WITH TOP EXECUTIVES OF OTHER COMPANIES FROM TEN COUNTRIES. IT'S RARE FOR A COMPANY TO SEND MORE THAN ONE REPRESENTATIVE, BUT REDHEAD WISHED TO MAKE ITS AMBITIOUS INTENTIONS KNOWN IMMEDIATELY.



“United Ukrainian Emirates: (from right to left) – Vyacheslav Bich, Sergei Barannik, Vladislav Burda, Vadim Orlov, Sergei Filyanin and Abdulaziz Bin Saif – participants in the IMD Advanced High Performance Leadership Program, 2011

BETTING ON THE OUTCOME

Most of the case studies in the IMD Advanced High Performance Leadership Program are held in small groups of 5-6 people. The RedHead executives did not cross paths in these groups except for in two practical exercises.

The first was a sporting event in which the five RedHead managers were joined by the owner of an Arab company, prompting the group members to call their team the “United Ukrainian Emirates.”

The exercise for each small group consisted of the following:

Two group members swung a jump rope and the other four had to jump over it simultaneously.

They spent 15 minutes preparing for the exercise, during which the team had to make a bet on the number of jumps in the competition.

If they managed to match or exceed their bet on the number of jumps, the team was declared a winner.

The United Ukrainian Emirates managed six consecutive jumps during the preparations, although they decided to make the best almost twice as high at 11 jumps.

And they met their stated goal!



EYES WIDE SHUT

The second case study the RedHead leaders participated in together was aimed at team interaction and mutual understanding under extreme conditions.

The five group members were blindfolded and a certain number of figures of different shape and color were placed before them. They were told that the set lying on the table before them was missing two figures. Blindfolded, the group members had to determine amongst themselves which two figures – both by color and shape – were missing. During the exercise, they were allowed to speak with each other and ask the coach questions about the color of the different figures.

The RedHead team completed the task in a record 26 minutes, while the limit was 37 minutes.

Sergei Barannik: *It was an exercise in communications, how we understand and hear one another. We started with each of us classifying the figures. We made a few mistakes: we misunderstood one another because, while touching and describing these figures, each person paints a certain picture in his/her head – someone might call it a person, while someone else thinks it's the letter P. Therefore, it was essential to describe the figure clearly and listen to the opinion of your colleague in order to match up these two pictures.*

Vyacheslav Bich: *Each person was given 5-6 figures. We couldn't see what they were. We could only figure it out by touching them. There should have been six of each figure, but there were two missing. We had to determine exactly which ones were missing in total darkness. And there were no clues. There were three or four groups and our team finished first. It was a great experience – a model for teamwork and team interaction.*

Vyacheslav Burda: *This exercise revealed that the behavior typical for people working in business also manifests itself in a game like this. For instance, Sergei Filyanin took over and proposed a strategy for selecting the figures. Vyacheslav was very creative in describing the shapes. He came up with the idea of what to call these different figures – hedgehogs, elephants, the moon or the letter Z. Vadim constantly tried to get more details, but nobody wanted to waste time on elaborating. Towards the end, when Sergei Barannik already had a very good idea about the principle, he took matters into his own hands and told everyone what to do. Thus, when he has the knowledge and information, he has time for implementation.*

Essentially, each person demonstrated the leadership skills that he/she displays in their daily life. Of course, we also learned about synchrony and learned how to listen to one another. We were simply able to see ourselves from the outside as well as what our communication model looks like when we do something together.

I'M OK, YOU'RE OK

Sergei Filyanin: *The leadership program we attended is built entirely on introducing our consciousness to an understanding of the situations we find ourselves in during moments of danger and stress, and from which we must effectively find a way out.*

We learned how to clearly determine what position we're in – in the role of a victim, persecutor or defender. And during the program, different courses of action were provided in order to turn a stalemate into an advantageous situation that can then conveniently be resolved.

It was extremely interesting when the leaders of the program held a dialogue with one another to demonstrate how one person behaves in each position and what he/she says. It was very informative. It's obvious what needs to be done in order to make the situation advantageous for both sides.

It's very difficult to pick up such information from books – you need live communication. Of course, there are some reference books. We read them all prior to this course. Being there, however, we were able to see with our own eyes how this works in practice and with a wide range of different people from Japan, Australia, Venezuela and Brazil.

Another interesting thing was that there is no boundary between personal and working in the minds of the founders of this program. An understanding of the mechanisms for action and conflict resolution is equally applicable in both your professional and personal life. Our practical exercises continuously switched from business situations to personal life and vice versa. Everything was very open and interesting. They provided us with methodology and terminology, and now

everyone who has experienced this program can speak about their problems using a common language.

Vadim Orlov: *We spoke about how important it is to remember that each of us is a genius in his/her profession. The key thing is to be bold enough to find this profession.*

We discussed the need to show attention (strokes) to other people. This is especially important for children: they start behaving poorly when they want to receive the slightest signs of attention even if it's negative attention.

The concept of "I'm OK, You're OK" is very important. It is only with this life philosophy that we can hold a proper conversation on equal terms. During any conversation between people, it's important to respect one another and proceed from the assumption that everything is OK for both of us. Accordingly, all other combinations are disadvantageous. "I'm not OK, You're OK" seems like despondency to the other person. "I'm OK, You're not OK" seems arrogant and as if one is morally superior to the other person. "I'm not OK, you're not OK" means everything is bad and depressing.

From my own experience, I can confirm that the concepts of bonding (establishing ties with interesting people) and putting the fish on the table (talking openly about hidden problems and resolving them) work effectively.

You must find and have as many reliable people in your circle as possible. Such people provide you with a safety zone, or Secure Base. The person's role is to listen, comprehend, give advice and, most importantly,

provide an impetus and confidence that you can continue to pursue and achieve success. It's equally important to be a Secure Base for other people as well.

It's essential to recognize that we are hostages and free yourself. One solution is to stop discounting (or selling yourself short). People often think they can't accomplish what they would ideally like to because they are too inexperienced, they haven't reached the "proper" age, or they are already past the "proper" age and think they are worse than others – all of this is called Discounting. Such behavior must be noticed

Don't be a hostage
Be free in your choice
Speak with confidence
Let's hear your voice

You are a genius
You can amaze
Take some risk and
Find your secure base

Be open
Give people some strokes
They will love you
That's not a joke

Make your bonding
And be adult
Stop playing games
Get YOUR result

and stopped – no excuses, only opportunities. Leaders believe they can, which is exactly why they can.

Upon return, I conducted a two-hour training session for the division heads of the SCM department in order to explain the core principles of the program. If each of us begins to apply them, I'm confident that the company's internal culture will improve dramatically.

On the way home, I wrote a poem dedicated to the main concepts we studied during the IMD Advanced High Performance Leadership Program (AHPL 2011).

Be a leader
Don't discount yourself
Help other people
And help yourself

I am OK and you are OK
Put the fish on the table
In an open way
I know that together we will prevail
We are free – we are not in jail

World of leadership
Is waiting for you
I am coming to it
And how about you?



Members of the IMD Advanced High Performance Leadership Program, May 2011

FISH ON THE TABLE

Vyacheslav Bich: "Putting the fish on the table" is a great technique. It can be applied in any relationship – work, home, business. We don't like to say unpleasant things. That's a natural desire for any person. Any discussion of problems is never pleasant. But there is a correct approach for discussing problems. It must be done properly and steadily with an understanding of the goals you are pursuing, sequentially deducing the problems that require discussion step by step.

Sergei Barannik: "The fish on the table" is a problem you are ignoring and don't want to talk

about. You have a specific manager or colleague with whom this problem could be solved, but for some reason you aren't sharing this problem, and the longer you go without figuring this problem out, the bigger it becomes. Eventually, this "fish on the table" spoils and begins to emit a stench.

What should you do? You have to "put the fish on the table," initiate a meeting or dialogue, and solve this problem. People often lack information and a mutual understanding. People look at problems differently, and during such discussions these problems are revealed.

At the end of the program, the RedHead managers set up a leadership council, which is to meet once every three months and discuss the organization's complex problems that are usually ignored. The main goal of the leadership program is to become leaders and raise leaders in your divisions and in the corporation as a whole. ■