

# FORTUNE 500 COMMERCIAL BANK ENTERPRISE IT DIVISION

*Tackling Corporate Culture Transformation*



## CHALLENGES

The Bank's campaign to change the corporate values was initiated to improve employee engagement, and overall performance levels with a focus on three areas: 1. Client First (a focus on providing superior customer service), 2. Teamwork (working together to provide efficient and cost-effective outcomes), and 3. Profitable Growth (ensuring that the results of each effort are not financially detrimental to the organization). A 2013 Gallup Poll found that globally, 63% of employees reported themselves as "not engaged" with their organization, which ultimately negatively affected their willingness to work together in teams. Additionally, a staggering 24% indicated that they were "actively disengaged" within their organization, which further led to a lack of cooperation and engagement among team members. In the U.S., active disengagement costs businesses \$450 to \$550 billion per year (Gallup, 2013).

Several challenges within the IT division prevented both successful collaboration and alignment around the recently communicated corporate values:

## SITUATION

The Enterprise Information Technology division of a Fortune 500 commercial Bank was a strong and vital resource to the organization. They were solid business partners with the retail, commercial and wholesale divisions of the Bank, maintaining and improving their sound technology platforms.

The Bank was in the early stages of instilling new corporate values via an organization-wide campaign. However, the Chief Information Technology officer knew that the IT division in particular was slow in its adaptation, and was challenged with meeting the new values. In particular, there were issues with trust and collaboration among direct reports, and to achieve sustained results, there was a need to connect and relate these values and concepts to the day-to-day operations. This meant that the Chief Information Officer (CIO) faced a severe gap between reality and what the values represented. Ultimately, he was charged with changing the existing culture within the IT division.

Senior IT management knew that the IT Division employees were struggling with the culture change; they did not feel valued, and were feeling challenged by attempting to align as a team.

- **Workloads that were consistently heavy, and employees who were focused on quantity instead of quality. Reactive decision making impacted effectiveness.**
- **Improved communication that was still inconsistent and lacked transparency.**
- **Collaboration that was highest in crisis mode or around specific tasks. A lack of role clarity, the limited understanding of groups within the organization, and conflicting priorities, all of which created silo behavior in employees and prevented cross-collaboration.**
- **Employees who did not feel valued or fully appreciated and found the work environment to be highly stressful.**
- **Conflict avoidance, which occurred among both leaders and employees, none of whom would speak up or directly with one another.**

Another major hurdle was the attitude toward the corporate values campaign itself. Many front-line employees viewed the campaign as simply another program that would fade with time. This is a common barrier to long-term organizational change programs. According to research by Towers Watson, only 55% of change projects in organizations are initially successful, and only 25% of those are successful in the long run (Towers Watson, 2013). This study found

# CHALLENGES

that change campaigns often fade in organizations because leadership moves onto other priorities, causing employees to develop a “wait and see” attitude rather than buying in permanently from the start. These kinds of failed change efforts also often leave employees skeptical of new initiatives (Aguirre, 2013).

“The lack of specific data from internal surveys made it nearly impossible to develop actionable change. It was only with the help of Stop At Nothing that the change became real.”



# SOLUTION

The company engaged Stop At Nothing to help identify and resolve the barriers that were preventing effective collaboration and alignment within the IT division. This process would close the corporate culture gap and make the work environment more effective, such that the IT team could adapt and follow the Bank’s new culture and values. Stop At Nothing’s role was to guide the implementation of that shift in corporate values, such that it would have sustained success within the IT organization. Team Effectiveness Assessments were executed by Stop At Nothing to help identify issues within the IT division so that the identified challenges could be proactively addressed.

## Team Effectiveness Assessments

**Assessment:** Stop At Nothing conducted a series of in-depth, anonymous interviews and surveys with representatives from both the Senior Management Team and the greater IT division members. These discussions focused on effective communication, collaboration and trust, and allowed Stop At Nothing to identify the heart of the issues – the areas with the greatest need to be addressed by the Senior Management Team.

“Specifically, it involved the gathering of data in the organization regarding what was working and what wasn’t,” says Jon Patton, Stop

At Nothing Managing Partner. “The process was completely confidential and anonymous, and produced a candid and honest view of the cultural values, under the reality of anonymity. This is really helpful to the leadership team. It’s very candid, actionable feedback.”

**Awareness:** The organizational report and feedback packages were reviewed by Stop At Nothing, who led an in-depth discussion with the Senior Management Team. This discussion is where the reality begins to be understood and grasped by the people involved. By focusing on the communication breakdowns that are occurring, new doors open and new steps can be taken.

Several key areas were identified that could significantly impact this division’s effectiveness, including:

- **A need to improve teamwork and collaboration among the IT division’s Senior Management Team**
- **Opportunities for improved inter- and intra-departmental partnering beneath the Senior Leadership level**
- **Enhancing communication, starting with the Senior Management Team and cascading down to all other levels**
- **A need to improve leadership effectiveness by virtue of individual development and commitment**

## BY THE NUMBERS – THE QUANTIFIABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

The IT organization  
surpassed the overall  
Bank employee  
satisfaction ratings.



The IT organization's  
employee engagement  
numbers improved year-  
over-year by

157%



far surpassing the  
employee engagement of  
the Bank in general, which  
improved by

46%



The Bank improved  
year-to-year in overall  
satisfaction: The  
IT division nearly  
doubled the Bank's  
improvement metric,  
from 0.15 compared  
to 0.27.

.15 → .27

## SOLUTION

**Alignment:** As Stop At Nothing steered the Senior Management Team through the findings, the division leaders began to understand the effects of certain actions on the greater division, which was ultimately leading to the disconnect in the values alignment.

**Action:** Over a three-day session, Stop At Nothing's experts coached the IT Senior Management Team about more effectively delivering and receiving feedback and constructive criticism concerning the strengths and weaknesses of each individual leader and the entire team. The team was also asked to consider behaviors and challenges that were causing blockades to reaching greater effectiveness.

While challenging, this type of in-depth team evaluation helps people contend with issues that had previously been avoided, and as a result, relationships can be greatly strengthened. As the Towers Watson study found, the most successful companies invest in effective training so that managers can support employees and help them be their most productive. This demonstrates that senior leadership has the courage to hear – and share – tough feedback during times of change (Towers Watson, 2013).

Stop At Nothing then proceeded to execute an additional five Team Development Process sessions within the division, cascading these to other levels beneath senior leadership. This clarified areas of strengths and opportunities and established team and individual action plans by which progress and success could be gauged, going forward.

When these results were cascaded to the IT division employees, additional opportunities for change were identified. With these additional changes identified, corresponding steps were outlined and agreed upon. The corporate culture

shift ultimately moved forward as the IT division employees successfully adjusted their values to align with the corporate values, implemented their action plans, and monitored their collective progress and effectiveness.

### Benefits

The Bank emphasized the new corporate values with the intention of improving employee satisfaction and engagement, and Stop At Nothing accelerated the alignment of values with the corporate culture transformation of the IT Division. The initial and cascaded Team Development Process sessions sped up the roll-out of the corporate values and provided quantifiable opportunities for individual leadership and teams to improve, via the team sessions.

Each team that participated in a Stop At Nothing session identified needed development areas, communicated and successfully implemented action plans, and created team and individual behavioral agreements to drive team and contributor performance.

In particular, employee engagement – the best metric to measure the health of a company's culture – improved exponentially, year-over-year. The prior issues of dysfunctional behavior, lack of trust, and silo activities were now viewed as "old behavior" that was neither indulged nor accepted.

The Chief Information Officer knew that problems existed. He had seen the results of internal surveys and had observed the lack of engagement and work delays caused by silo behavior. However, the lack of specific data from internal surveys made it nearly impossible to develop actionable change. It was only with the help of Stop At Nothing that the change became real.

# ABOUT STOP AT NOTHING

We help companies make positive changes in their behaviors among individual leaders, teams and broader organizational cultures.

Our approach includes understanding the unique opportunities as outlined by key leadership in the company. From these, we customize an approach that can include:

## Individual Leadership Programs

- High Impact Leadership Series
- Peak Performance Seminar
- Executive Coaching
- Discover The Coach Seminar
- Trust & Relationship Selling Seminar
- Customized Leadership Development

## Team Effectiveness

- Individual leadership teams
- Multiple leadership teams across a division or company

## Organizational Transformation

- Cultural Effectiveness Process

Our methodology looks at the underlying behavioral and cultural norms that impact organizational results. We look to discover the key behavioral tendencies of the executive team that drive or inhibit the overall bottom-line results of the company. From there, we help the team develop and create key strategic action plans to improve results, and we align leadership behaviors at all levels to support the strategy.

Services also available in Spanish.

## REFERENCES

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