



Sony uses StressScan to improve health, enthusiasm, and personal resilience

BACKGROUND

The Sony Group is a leading supplier of electronic and entertainment products on the global stage, both for the consumer market and for professional users. Sony is a thought leader in the area of personal development, putting significant budget behind supporting its staff to achieve highly and to explore their full potential.

Sony in Spain has based its future strategy on three pillars:

- product
- process
- people

The most important part of the 'people' aspect was to move from a model of management by objectives to one of guidance and values, where overarching principles are given, but actual decision-making is devolved to individuals. In order to achieve this, it needed the management population to lead the change.

Sony was operating in a very turbulent environment due to increasing difficulties in their major markets. It found itself in a new and unfamiliar situation; still a market leader, but under increased pressure from larger, more professionalised distributors with financial and economic power. The challenge for Sony was that managers who had been successful in the past now needed to lead in a somehow different environment, where paradigms and approaches which had worked so well no longer applied. These new realities took managers far out of their comfort zone and, coupled with the aggressiveness of the market, contributed to a feeling of lack of control.

Sony wanted to equip these managers with self-awareness and self-management which would, in turn, help them to overcome the challenge as well as minimise the risks of stress and poor performance. Sony commissioned Manum, a consultancy firm in Spain, to equip its managers in all aspects of emotional leadership, both for the purpose of emotional self-management and for the emotional management of their teams.



TOOL AND APPROACH

Manum Training and Development designed an intervention using ConsultingTools' StressScan as a diagnostic instrument, feeding into a development plan to reduce the likely causes of stress. StressScan is a self-rating tool which uses a battery of questions around lifestyle, work habits, health and relationships to determine the areas which are most likely to cause stress to the respondent. Manum then used the reports generated from this tool to engage the participants with the concept that different individuals could be stressed by different triggers and to identify the areas with the highest risks for each of them.

The participants received a 3-day workshop, exploring the causes of stress and strategies for reducing the risks of stress. The workshop, which involved doctors, physical trainers and Manum consultants, ranged over diet, health and fitness, attitudes and modes of thought, relationships and work/life balance. It also included a session on music therapy and one on the use of golf to relax and de-stress. Finally, the participants were asked to prepare and commit to a personal development plan, tailored to reduce the likelihood of stress in areas which StressScan had identified as being of the highest risks for them.

OUTCOME

Sony found that the participants had a high level of agreement with the StressScan results. They were able to recognise and own the report contents as relevant and applicable to them. As a result, they had a feeling of personal engagement with the workshop and the development process. This was perceived as something useful in addressing the specific issues they faced.

The participants found StressScan easy to use, with the reports being easy to understand and relate to. As a result, they were very willing to develop real, focussed development plans based on their results. One of the key learning points for many participants was the difference between being very busy and being stressed. They said: 'We realised that people doing the same job could experience very different levels of stress'.

Sony regarded the intervention as a success since it met the objective of supporting the managers to reduce their stress levels.

