

Staying ahead of fast growth by developing the bench strength of the management team.

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- Chris Wood, *President*,
TFT Global Inc.

The Business and its Environment

TFT Global Inc. is a logistics and distribution, production services, quality services and optimization advisory firm. The company’s work includes containment, sequencing (such as for just-in-time manufacturing), trucking and small-parts assembly. The company is forward thinking and flexible. Fast growing companies each face their own special pressures; whether companies have the capacity to cope with the growth depends on the capacity of their leaders.

The Company’s Goals in Working with J.D. Creaghan Group Inc.

Although the company was successful, the executive was interested in working better together as a team. The company initially began working with Jonathan Creaghan, President of J.D. Creaghan Group Inc., for management coaching.

“Team building, and training using Jonathan’s tools, was how we started,” says Chris Wood, President of TFT Global Inc. “The second side of the effort was working on the soft side of organization - how to get the ownership and co-workers to be cohesive, how to take the existing dynamics and align those dynamics.”

J.D. Creaghan Group's Approach with the Company

Creaghan says he aimed to put the management team ahead of the speed of growth so they could manage success.

Using principles found in his "*Human Side of Business*" philosophy, he emphasized teaching, "how to believe in people more than they believe in themselves." He believes that people respond to the intention of a person more than just the specific action. For people's actions to be effective and useful they must be based in what Creaghan calls "the aware mind."

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People's actions generally tend to be based on reaction and habits of thinking rather than on a real appreciation of the reality around them. The *TotalLeader*[®] process undertaken with executives at TFT Global began with strengthening the powers of observation. Instead of listening to the endless internal chatter, Creaghan describes in his book, *Getting More Done*, how people begin to become aware of a part of themselves that "intuitively knows that quiet observation and a quiet mind will produce better answers". As their capacity to work with their quiet, aware mind grows they find they can, "achieve more in less time, and remain calm and clear-headed when making critical decisions." Working with calm awareness is essential to being able to handle the demands of high growth.

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Staff are also aware of the quality of the interactions among executives. Through the *TotalLeader*[®] process, the executives at TFT Global came to a better understanding of their common mission and were able to transmit that mutual awareness to the staff by their changed behaviour.

Whether the organisation be charitable, knowledge-based or labour-based, the employees have to have a sense of 'why we are here'. The aim of Creaghan's work at TFT Global was to build behaviour-based leadership and bring the team together in a high-performing culture. "You have to instill what the beliefs are and set them by example," says Chris Wood, "People want to work in a well-run company."

"Project management and timelines are fine," he continues, "but the executive team must follow them, and for example be on time or early for everything, whether meetings, requests or quotes, and be seen doing this, for these tools to work."

Benefits Seen by the Client

International trade requires clear communication at every level of the company, and Creaghan's work has been vital in developing this. "Global commerce is more about transparency, candour, getting your customer to trust you with millions of dollars of inventory," said Wood. "They need to trust you to know what is where. You have to be sure that when the customer has a question about inventory you know the answer right then."

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For this transparency of communication to happen required extensive work by the executive, and then by those successively down the chain of management. The success of the company is based on open communication, whether about financials, marketing, any injury at the plant, or promotions at the plant – they find that advance information is key. The executive spend 80% of their time on communication.

If people know what is going on, then there is no lack of trust. "If timeliness and information is key, then if you buy a back-up generator, for example, staff will understand the purchase. They understand that the generator will guarantee the clients can get the information they need regardless of local outages," says Chris Wood.

TFT Global found that once staff understood that information transparency was the key to business success, then everyone pulled for the same thing, and as systems were set up they were designed to have the answers on hand even before the customer called. Chris said, "Whether it be IT or shipping, the customer will forgive errors if they know about them and they know when to expect the product or the solution."

Next Steps With the Company

"Jonathan's approach is not to teach and leave, but rather to be a partner and as much as part of the business as management," says Chris Wood. "Next we are going to do some coaching for future leaders. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses - the key is putting the right person in the right job. Jonathan's training will bring that out, and help us put the right type of leader in the right spot." The plans include an in-house university based on Creaghan Group's tools; the company takes expertise transfer very seriously.



Company Website

www.tftglobal.com

NAICS Codes for TFT Global

541614 - logistics and distribution, production services, service optimization

Case Study Author Information

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