

case study

Culture of innovation required greater structure for new growth at Articon Integralis

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Guenter Fuhrmann, Vice COO, Articon Integralis

Comprised of young staff with highly focused areas of expertise, IT companies typically focus on encouraging development and creativity. Bureaucracy, or an emphasis on process, is often discouraged, for fear that employees might perceive it negatively. However, as a business matures, the need for structure and process also grows. That's the situation in which Articon Integralis found itself.

Europe's leading IT security company, Articon Integralis had grown rapidly since the merger of two independent businesses. But as industry competition increased and profits shrank, the company began to look at ongoing obstacles to success.

From instant wealth to sustained growth

The organisation had evolved in a market epitomised by young entrepreneurs making vast sums of money. The prevalent culture was focused on research and development - that of 'university innovation.' Articon Integralis needed to evolve into a more stable organisation without alienating or demoralising its current workforce.

In order to provide an in-depth assessment of these cultural issues, Getfeedback* was commissioned to initiate, develop and manage an employee survey process. Getfeedback specialises in online employee surveys, interpreting results, and feeding the right information to the right audiences in a timely fashion.

"After consulting with the key stakeholders, we developed a questionnaire that focused on culture, communications, leadership and customers," said Alison Gill, CEO of Getfeedback. "And to tie the survey effectively into the organisation's strategic planning, we also included questions on employee development and business strategy."

Before the survey was distributed, Getfeedback put filters in place that would allow data to be analysed by country, function and operating unit.

Survey results were unexpected

The survey identified a critical need among employees for a more structured approach to career development and performance management.

"Our board was very surprised by the findings," said Articon Integralis Vice COO, Guenter Fuhrmann. "They'd assumed that implementing more structure would alienate the type of people we employ here."

The survey also revealed key concerns the employees had about the organisation's strategy, namely that the business wasn't doing a good enough job to differentiate itself in the marketplace. As a result of this feedback, a new strategic review team was created, with wide-ranging authority to bring about change.

Overall, the process of engaging its employees through an in-depth survey process has yielded greater results than were initially anticipated, and should help Articon Integralis maintain its edge in the competitive IT security field.

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