



Engaged employees driving CAMS towards a bright future

CAMS – the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport – has embarked on a journey of significant change over the last three years to achieve its strategic plan and guarantee a sustainable future with the help of an employee survey.



A state of change

CAMS is a not-for-profit member-based organisation focused on the administration, development, promotion and regulation of motor sport across Australia. CAMS has around 50 staff and is headquartered in Melbourne, with offices across Australia.

CAMS experienced a state of significant change in late 2012 with new administration taking over, an almost entirely new executive team and CEO, and a newly created HR function. HR Manager Tamara Joy was appointed and quickly identified a number of staff issues and pockets of disengagement and negativity in the organisation.

CAMS and Insync's Alignment and Engagement Survey

CAMS needed an avenue for staff to confidentially provide feedback and the new executive team wanted to build on positive elements of the work experience and identify hot spots to be improved. It was the perfect storm for an organisation in change and the right time to conduct an employee survey.

CAMS chose to partner with Insync because of their experience and benchmarking capabilities in the sporting sector, as well as their unique and actionable Alignment and Engagement Survey (AES) framework.

Joy explained: “Insync’s AES framework is well-researched and allows for easy identification of areas that are working well and also areas for improvement. It gave us a baseline to measure how various sections of the business are impacting our organisation’s effectiveness.”

The AES measures the two most important drivers of sustainable high performance – alignment and employee engagement. Alignment and engagement levels are determined from employee feedback to survey items which fall under eight factors: long term direction, senior leadership, team leadership, team effectiveness, performance focus, investment in people, investment in systems and engagement.

AES critical for achieving strategic success

One of CAMS’ key strategic priorities for 2014-16 is to “strengthen our culture and capabilities”. The AES provided a foundation from which to build the organisational culture and relevant initiatives, and provides a baseline measurement which can be tracked over time. All managers have a stake in the process and work with their teams to action their feedback.



The results

CAMS conducted two Alignment and Engagement Surveys 12 months apart in 2013 and 2014. The 2013 results were an eye-opener, particularly to the new CEO, Eugene Arocca: "I vividly remember the presentation of our survey results. You cannot underestimate the impact the "red" had on the room – it sucked the oxygen out of the place. But it was a good measure for the executive team which was almost brand new, in terms of opening our eyes to what needed fixing."

The 2013 survey found that only 38% of staff were aligned and 64% were engaged. This put CAMS towards the "low performance" quartile on Insync's framework. All seven alignment factors ranked in the bottom 25% of Insync's database, represented by red in the reports. In particular, investment in people and long term direction were definite opportunities for improvement. "Staff didn't know the direction the business was heading, and how they fitted into it", Joy explained. "There was a big gap between senior management alignment and engagement, and the rest of the business." Staff also highlighted concerns with communication across all levels of the business, relationships between departments and retaining and rewarding staff.

In December 2014, the survey results had improved dramatically. Overall CAMS was positioned in the "high performance" top quartile when compared to Insync's benchmark. The alignment score was 62%, representing a huge shift of 24% from the previous year and one of the largest increases Insync has seen.

Engagement scored 79% – a significant increase of 15% – and one of the highest engagement scores in Insync's benchmark database across all industries. Team leadership, senior leadership and long term direction were high performing areas and there was no red to be seen.

"Insync's AES framework gave us a baseline to measure how various sections of the business are impacting our organisation's effectiveness. "

Tamara Joy
HR Manager

The extremely high response rate of 92%, compared to an industry average of 70%, demonstrated that staff were committed to contributing to the success of their organisation.

So how did CAMS achieve this incredible turnaround?

Two-way communication the key

For Joy and Arocca, it was all about creating avenues for two-way communication. During the 12 month period between surveys, staff were heavily involved in developing a range of people-focused initiatives:

- Staff were included as a key stakeholder in the strategic plan and defined one of the key priorities as "Strengthen CAMS' culture and capabilities" with relevant actions and KPIs
- Six-weekly all staff CEO updates with organisational wide updates, strategic plan initiatives and recognition of staff efforts
- Monthly staff newsletter
- A Performance and Development Review (PDR) process that linked individual KPIs with the strategic plan
- A concerted effort to inform staff of relevant information or changes prior to public release
- Additional learning and development opportunities provided for staff
- Implementation of the SWAT (social, wellbeing activities team) who identify areas of interest and organise activities to build a sense of team and fun across the organisation, especially including interstate staff.

Arocca was pleased with the changes: "I think staff valued having an opportunity to have their say, but also appreciated that their feedback was genuinely taken on board and changes were implemented immediately. People are now more engaged and genuinely want to help the organisation be better."

Driving engagement by showing care and commitment

Joy believes involving staff from the outset and working with them to further explore the key areas of focus was an extremely important step. "It showed that we care about and are committed to them, which is one of the key drivers of engagement from Insync's research framework." This was demonstrated by an overhaul of their performance appraisal (PDR), professional development and reward and recognition programs.

The PDRs involve biannual individual meetings, supported by frequent informal chats between employee and manager to give and receive feedback, discuss development needs and talk about career ambitions. Focusing on only five to six KPIs and creating the opportunity for more conversations opened up the lines of communication.

Professional development had not been encouraged prior to the 2013 survey so this became a hotspot. Monthly learning lunches, access to a training library and more formal

discussions around development needs are helping CAMS get the best out of their people.

Recognition of service milestones, birthdays and staff achievements is now the norm, with the executive team taking the time to personally acknowledge and thank staff.

Achieving better business outcomes

Frequent and consistent communication about the overall strategy, goals and KPIs and position descriptions has allowed staff to be clear about the roles they play, their key areas of focus and what is expected of them, with accountability and productivity improving.

Engaged and happier staff have improved customer service levels, resulting in greater member satisfaction. Better communication internally has improved communication externally with staff being comfortable and informed to make decisions and relay appropriate information to members.

Communication between departments has noticeably improved with a silo mentality no longer apparent. Staff are also willing to work outside of their normal hours to get the job done, showing a better connection with the strategic direction and vision. Working hours are more flexible for those who need it and discretionary effort has visibly increased.

"You're not going to achieve anything without investing in your people, supporting them, bringing in a culture of achievement and positivity. "

Eugene Arocca
CEO

CAMS' tips for getting the best out of your people

- 1** Invest in staff – it doesn't have to be a huge dollar investment. It's more about the little and simpler things – listening, showing you care, are committed to and value them, recognise their efforts and achievements, and create a fun work environment.
- 2** Recognising long hours and weekend work, rewarding and acknowledging efforts and offering flexibility is important.
- 3** Be clear about what you want to achieve, ensure appropriate leadership, support and commitment, plan your approach and follow through.

You're not going to achieve anything without investing in your people, supporting them, bringing in a culture of achievement and positivity. People are the most important part of any organisation's opportunities and they should always come first.

Streamlining the recruitment process with clear position descriptions and selection criteria that link to the overall strategy has allowed CAMS to recruit people who are aligned with the direction of the business and culture. Joy said: "Getting the right people has been an important part of our cultural change process."

Retaining the right people has also greatly impacted the business with staff turnover down to 6.11% as at July 2015 (4% voluntary), compared to around 50% in December 2013. The average turnover across most industries is around 10-15%.

A new direction

CAMS' journey has not only improved employee engagement and internal operations, it has also contributed to a more favourable response from the general public, and commercially from sponsors and other organisations.

Arocca explained: "We have really rattled the cage in what we're doing and how we're doing things. It's not a revolution but an evolution. There is still some way to go for our brand to be recognised in the light in which we want to be seen here in Australia, but we're committed to the long term."

"Previously we found it tough to successfully engage with all our stakeholders (clubs, government, volunteers and members), but we have lifted our brand image and reputation and it all stems from the work we have done internally. More people know more about CAMS and what we do – and essentially, this helps us achieve our vision, which is to see 'more people enjoying more motor sport'."

About Insync

Insync is passionate about helping organisations achieve sustainable high performance by measuring and improving employee, customer, patient, board and other stakeholder engagement.

With over 25 years' experience, we're experts in staff surveys, customer surveys, employee engagement surveys, employee surveys, exit interviews, EVP reviews, 360 feedback reviews and leadership team and board evaluations. We also assist clients with focus groups, action planning and change management.

We've conducted over 1,000 employee, customer and board surveys in the last five years for some of the largest organisations throughout Asia Pacific including: ACCC, ASX, Cathay Pacific, Fairfax, GlaxoSmithKline, John Holland, Johnson & Johnson Medical, KPMG, Metro, Nufarm, Orica, QBE, Swire, Toll, WorleyParsons, Visy, AFL, Mission Australia, several federal and state government departments, many local councils and most universities.



CEO Eugene Arocca presenting an award to long serving employee Bruce Keys for his 30 years' service.

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