



Focusing on People During an Intense Transformation and Change Journey



ORGANIZATION

Shell Fleet Solutions, Central Eastern Europe and South Africa



INDUSTRY

Energy & Petrochemical



ABOUT

Shell is a global group of energy and petrochemicals companies with an average of 93,000 employees in more than 70 countries. They use advanced technologies and take an innovative approach to help build a sustainable energy future.



BACKGROUND

In December 2015, the Shell Fleet Solutions team in Central Eastern Europe and South Africa wanted to take a new approach to continuous improvement. They were looking to strengthen working relationships between the sales and support functions in their ever-changing business environment.

Around this time, Shell leaders came across Arbinger's book, *Leadership & Self-Deception*. This was the beginning of their journey to heighten their self-awareness and become much more alive to their impact on the people around them.

Shell leaders realized that the essence of mindset change (from an "inward mindset" to an "outward mindset") was not a training solution. It was instead about changing ways of working to build and deepen self-accountability, collaboration, focus on results, and relationships among team members. While there was a training component to familiarize leaders and teams with the outward mindset frameworks and tools, the real work happened in the workplace where the frameworks and tools were infused into daily work practices.

FOCUS AREAS

Every big change starts with something small. The key principle at Shell was: *Don't try to fix other people. Instead, focus on our Organising Principle.*

This meant:

- Doing what we have control over, and doing it well
- Helping others heighten their self-awareness by using existing forums (e.g., regularly scheduled meetings) to conduct outward mindset activities
- Allowing people to "get there in their own time"
- Continually reflecting on our own experiences

Shell then started to apply a clear three-point structure to every conversation and engagement:

1. Doing a brief "check-in" around:
 - When did I last have an inward mindset (or "go in the box")?
 - What are the signs of me going in the box?

2. Asking questions and being curious:
 - What are you strong at?
 - How might we be looking at this from the box?
 - What would you like to do?
3. Steering the conversation to focus on impact and understanding others:
 - What are the key objectives of my colleagues, partners, and stakeholders?
 - What can I do to help others succeed?
 - How may I have made things more difficult (or failed to make things easier) for others?
 - How can I mitigate my (negative) impact on others?
 - How can I help things go right instead of dealing with things that go wrong?

After purchasing the books *Leadership & Self-Deception* and *The Outward Mindset* for everyone in the region, Shell started to use the mindset and self-awareness tools and framework templates in performance discussions and mid/end-year reviews to drive self-accountability among individual leaders and their teams.

Critically, Shell leaders focused on first understanding the needs, objectives and challenges of their stakeholders before jumping into action.

Through this work, local leadership teams came together as one team to shape a common objective and to set the path to achieve that objective in any way they thought best. In addition, the leadership team started to practice giving and receiving feedback using face-to-face meetings.

This was not an easy journey; not everyone found the material and tools immediately helpful. Some people also felt the material was too theoretical. Shell leaders also recognized how often they were still working with an inward mindset and how hard it was to actually make the change. Holding oneself accountable is not easy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE INITIATIVE

Around the same time, Shell Fleet Solutions was required to implement a significant organizational change project. This initiative impacted over 150 people across Europe and Asia. Some of these employees' jobs would disappear as a result of the change effort. These individuals were expected to perform their normal duties while preparing to hand those roles over to a new organization and also implementing a number of large system changes.

To lay the foundation for a successful transition, the project team and leadership team decided to focus not only on the tangible project objectives, but also on the idea of treating people as people.

The leadership team continued to put their efforts into helping people being more self-aware, shifting their focus toward being helpful, and holding themselves accountable. The organization invested in several outward mindset workshops for their leaders and teams across the sales and support organizations. In addition seven people were trained as in-house facilitators of the outward mindset material to help continue to support the various teams with the implementation and roll-out of the tools and frameworks.

RESULTS

Driving and sustaining change is an extremely challenging task in any organization. However, Shell Fleet Solutions found that by working on addressing individual and collective mindsets as a key strategy, they were far more effective at driving and sustaining change. The ultimate impact and results of this work were:

- Structured self-accountability and performance discussions owned by individual team members
- Less victim mentality, less blaming of partners for potential issues, and less defensiveness
- Much more ownership of challenges; immediate offering of and follow-up with real help
- More interest in each other's challenges, objectives, and ways of working
- More accountability of own shortcomings, especially at the leadership level, and open acknowledgment of this to their teams
- Clearer "one team" approach, a sense of belonging to a family, and high trust
- An effective way of working across multiple end-to-end partners, where people are much more conscious of the impact they have on each other and how they can help each other succeed through their efforts
- Better communication between teams, especially between offshore support services and onshore sales teams

In addition, the organizational change effort was a success. The transition was characterized by:

- Selfless dedication and effort by the support teams to ensure the smooth transition of their work activities, despite a direct impact on their own roles and their future with Shell
- Continuing motivation and curiosity in the various new teams about the work
- Strong dedication from the entire organization to the business
- A clear ONE Team mindset which, despite the emotional challenges, was evident in the excellent cooperation between teams, high resilience, care and concern for each other, passion for customers and tireless work to deliver on the mission

The Shell Fleet Solutions team achieved true continuous improvement as originally hoped for. The teams captured opportunities to further streamline and simplify processes throughout the new organization. Most significantly, the teams set up the business for long term success while making it much easier for customers to do business with Shell.

Arbinger is the world leader in mindset change. Through training, consulting, coaching, and implementation tools, we enable individuals, teams, and organizations to change from an inward mindset to an outward mindset and apply key strategies and behavioral patterns that reinforce this change. The result is dramatic and sustained improvement in the key success indicators of our client organizations—in their levels of collaboration, employee engagement, accountability, revenue growth, market share, and profitability.