

VERPLAS CASE STUDY



Verplas case study

Customer Quote

"This is/was an amazing programme and has so many positive changes in the workplace. It was a pleasure to come to work.

More companies should get on board with this culture change. Not only does it improve the workplace but productivity from individuals increases". Emma Manchester, Customer Services Specialist, Verplas Limited

Overview

Verplas is one of the UK's leading ventilation manufacturers. Whilst the company has experienced lots of growth and success over the years, it was experiencing a period of underperformance which led to a new MD and Senior Leadership Team in 2020.

Sewells were invited by Derren Gittins (the new MD) to put together a culture-change based business improvement programme to transform Verplas to create a positive high-performance culture which everyone in the business would want to contribute to and feel proud to be part of.

Highlights

- Highest sales and profit ever in the history of Verplas since it was founded back in 1986
- Productivity improved by 30%

- Employer of choice, attracting new employees from the area due to building a positive reputation, based on how they treat staff.
- Successful implementation of the Communications Team which has been welcomed across the business, encouraging open and honest communication.
- Hard-earned changes in attitudes, hearts, and minds across the business.

The challenge:

Verplas faced a number of challenges when Derren took over:

- A blame culture had taken root within the business which led to mistakes being hidden or covered up, and a silo mentality within departments.
- The previous command and control leadership style had eroded trust and confidence and left the team feeling battered and bruised.
- Several important operational processes and approaches had not been adopted and some basic “housekeeping” procedures were not being followed.
- The business was underperforming and not operating effectively or efficiently.
- The new MD didn’t immediately have the credibility or trust with the people at Verplas and there was widespread scepticism about his intentions for the business and the benefit of the culture change programme.

The requirement:

There was a strong need for people-focused leadership to enable current leaders and managers to inspire trust and motivate the team whilst balancing the requirement for positive performance improvements to demonstrate that the required changes would produce positive business results.

The Team needed to be able to see some quick wins to feel motivated to engage with change whilst at the same time accepting the need for continuous improvement and laying the foundations for a longer-term high performance sustainable business.

The Culture change programme needed to work hand in hand with essential operational changes to achieve an aligned and cohesive programme of improvement across the business which would produce the visible and tangible desired results.

How we helped:

The initial focus was to support the Senior Leadership Team to create a Vision for the future and strategies which would give the business a clear sense of direction and a plan with milestones and measures to get there. Values and standards of behaviour were created with involvement from the whole Verplas Team to create a framework and rules of engagement which everyone felt they could sign up to. This framework provides clarity on what behaviours are expected from everyone in the business on a day-to-day basis and contributes to more collaborative team working, decision making and problem solving, whilst at the same time reducing the blame culture and silo working.

In addition, the framework creates meaning for day-to-day actions working within and across teams within the wider organisational objectives and has been used as a way of recognising, appreciating, and reinforcing individual and team contributions and positive behaviours.

We started the programme with some 121 in-depth diagnostics interviews to find out what people were really thinking and feeling about their past experiences, and their hopes and aspirations for the future of the business. Many people were disillusioned by their own experiences of the business, and they had lost trust and belief in the company, the leaders and managers.

Whilst many wanted to believe in a better future, their own personal experiences had eroded their confidence and there were high levels of scepticism that the Senior Leadership Team could deliver the desired performance results whilst at the same time creating a more open, positive, and trusting culture.

The step-by-step transition plan started by highlighting and working on changing attitudes and mindsets, as it was clear that only when the hearts and minds of the team were won, could the real transformation begin.

The programme included a series of leadership workshops including topics such as; Leading Change, leadership styles and communication. We started with the Senior Leadership Team and specific elements of some of the modules were also rolled out to rest of the business to ensure alignment and consistency. To support the programme, a guiding Team was initially formed from a cross section of team members to keep the initial implementation on track and to enable everyone to play their full part in the business transformation. More recently, a Communication Team has been created to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute their views and have a say in how they keep the positive improvements going.

To measure the success of the programme, to identify the gaps and to prioritise the next steps, the 121 in-depth diagnostic interviews have been repeated, and a company-wide Engagement Survey was carried out to gather both qualitative and quantitative feedback with the focus on clear action plans to continue the improvements.

The Senior Leadership Team have also received a series of 121 performance coaching sessions and undertaken a 360-degree feedback exercise to help them understand themselves better and appreciate the impact they have on others so that they can become better leaders and can continue to produce the best outcomes for the teams, the business and themselves.

We are excited to be continuing the journey with Verplas in 2023 and into 2024.

The results:

- Highest sales and profit ever in the history of Verplas since it was founded back in 1986
- Investors in Customers Bronze award in 2021 and Silver award in 2022
- Indutrade award for sustainability for people winner UK, runner up for the global award 233 companies
- Employee satisfaction score of 72% (First Engagement Survey)
- Employee engagement score of 73% (First Engagement Survey)
- Waste reduced by 80%
- Productivity improved by 30%

- Move to recycled raw materials and renewable electricity to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Most of the site improvements, painting walkways, improved work areas done by internal team members around production requirements
- Increase in sales by 32%, achieved without additional labour costs
- Gross margin improvement by 8%
- Employer of choice, attracting new employees from the area due to building a positive reputation, based on how they treat staff.
- Increased training opportunities with over 3000 hours dedicated with more uptake than ever before
- Welfare facilities completely refurbished in part using the team's expertise and ideas to do so.
- Successful implementation of the Communications Team which has been welcomed across the business, encouraging open and honest communication.
- Best month ever/highest month for profit and sales since starting the programme
- Hard-earned changes in attitudes, hearts and minds across the business
- Engaged everyone in crafting a Verplas "Mission, Vision, Values and standards of behaviour" which was positively welcomed, and which now gives a clear sense of direction, and more meaning and relevance to every team member's day to day activities in contributing to achieving the desired culture & business performance

Customer Quote

*"Congratulations Sewells team! What you do is life changing for the organisation, the team, the results and all team members, what's not to like. Unfortunately, consultants are like bankers, estate agents and double-glazing salesman, some bad apples but do not paint all with the same brush. Having worked for global blue-chip companies and several little private limited companies, both achieving fantastic improvements, why not try them? I have used Sewells for many years with great success, if you want to see what Sewells can do please call me on 07857246675 or visit my factory. Not all consultants are the same". **Derren Giffens, MD, Verplas Limited***