

CLIENT CASE

REVIVING THE UNIQUE COMPANY CULTURE OF CHR. HANSEN

The world's most sustainable bioscience company, Chr. Hansen, chose LIVING INSTITUTE to dig into the company and rephrase and future-proof the extraordinary, long-lasting and living core of the culture. The strengthened and shared identity will help inspire great decisions and drive global growth many years ahead.



"The work we did became a catalyser for our future focus on our purpose; To work for a better world."

Mauricio Graber, CEO of Chr. Hansen

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Alice Larsen, CVP HR at Chr. Hansen

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS REVIVING THE UNIQUE COMPANY CULTURE OF CHR. HANSEN

SITUATION

In 2018 CVP HR at Chr. Hansen, Alice Larsen saw a gap. The global company was growing heavily with 350-500 hires over a two-year period. It turned out that the on-boarding programs differed a lot throughout the organization, and the stories about the culture and values did not correspond at all. Some referred to old value-words that had proven difficult to translate into behaviour and thus had been almost forgotten. Others simply avoided the issue, not feeling confident about which was the official, current story. The result was confusion, and new-comers often told an entirely different story than people who had been on board for many years.

CHALLENGES

Ambitious organic growth targets and a growing global organization called for a stronger internal coherence.

Need to strengthen cultural foundation to maintain company DNA throughout the organization and ensure future growth is sustainable

Alice Larsen took the problem with lacking shared understanding and narratives to the new CEO, Mauricio Graber, who immediately agreed to launch a culture project. The decision was made by the Corporate Leadership Team and effected right away.



Alice Larsen,
CVP HR at Chr.Hansen

SOLUTION

Chr. Hansen chose LIVING INSTITUTE to lead the journey of discovery into the deep culture of one of Denmark's most proud and successful, international companies. First, an extensive amount of knowledge and impressions from interviews and workshops was boiled down to one original, revived version of the driving forces of the company culture. This version was thoroughly tested globally through interviews and focus groups. During the intensive process the understanding and expression of the cultural forces was constantly challenged by passionate employees. Then it was elaborated and carefully refined, all the time making sure that the unique power was not lost in translation. After a four months process, the model reached the point where it remained strong, unique and applicable - and at the same time resonated with new as well as very experienced employees throughout different country cultures and business areas.



Mauricio Graber,
CEO Chr.Hansen

TODAY THE CULTURE MODEL IS INTEGRATED IN ALL THE STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES OF CHR. HANSEN

- Onboarding programs globally
- Introduction programs for new employees
- Leadership training
- 360 degree feedback for managers
- Part of OR-report (Organization review)
- To match the cultural fit between candidates and possible M&A's with Chr. Hansen

THE PROCES

- The entire process took from end of May till Kick Off at Global Leadership Summit 6th of September 2018 with top 175 leaders. An intense process for less than 4 months
- 450-500 employees were directly involved
- 175 leaders and the HR Business Partners were trained in using the Leadership tool to be able to run Culture Dialogues locally

THE PHASES TOWARDS THE FINAL RESULT

1. Data collection - existing data, interviews and focus groups globally - face2face and virtual meetings
2. Identifying Company Core Identity with Corporate Leadership team using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® -Method to help them make the intangible (culture) concrete and articulate the complex perception of the DNA of Chr. Hansen today and the need for the future
3. Validating data and crafting draft Culture Model based on quantitative and qualitative data
4. Testing draft Culture Model with Employee focus groups globally
5. Crafting final Culture model and translating into behavioural guidelines and testing it with Corporate Leadership Team
6. Defining tool kit for leaders to drive global roll out
7. Creating global communication campaign named "Chr. Hansen Moment" and roll out in collaboration with Open Communication Bureau, including Yammer campaign, videos with CEO Mauricio Graber etc.
8. Training of Corporate Leadership Team and HR Business Partners using the Culture model and the tool kit
9. Kick off with 175 leaders at the Global Leadership Summit

THE RESULT

THE CULTURE MODEL OF CHR. HANSEN

Chr. Hansen Culture

Four cultural drivers, creating a dynamic force that guides our ambitions and actions at work



LIVING INSTITUTE provided the open minded, critical and culturally intelligent external eyes and brains to find and innovate the future-proof core of a unique culture – and in a professional and emotional process gave it back to the owners

“When I got to know Chr. Hansen, I was deeply impressed by the quality of the people and the culture, and I realized that we weren’t able to articulate that quality precisely, even if we obviously shared it. When I asked, the answers differed a lot. Knowing that cultural uniqueness can weaken and eventually be lost if you do not share it and deliberately keep it alive and working, I was convinced that we needed a culture revival and a link between performance and culture. That is what we got! When I presented the results to the board, the reaction was: “We have really missed this!” Their concern was that the speed with which we grew the company posed a severe risk that we would compromise our unique way of working on the go.”

Mauricio Graber, CEO at Chr. Hansen A/S



A unique dialogue tool that challenges decisions and drives confident results

“The result struck us as being really genius. We have actually found our own way to talk about culture. Not just a new set of rather inactive words. We now have a strong, shared narrative that describes and visualizes the core culture at Chr. Hansen – and reminds us what makes us unique and what we have to live up to. The central idea of how the four cultural drivers must always be balanced on the two axes is great. It works as a dialogue tool and leads us to both/and conclusions – not either/or. The model is simple, yet complex enough to sustain over time.”

Alice Larsen, CVP HR at Chr. Hansen A/S

Identifying ways of working and thinking that go all the way back to the founders and all the way into the future

“The work we did became a catalyser for our future focus on our purpose; To work for a better world. To constantly address opportunities. Our way of thinking has been turned around, so now our purpose and culture drive the strategy, and this in a way brings everything we do to a higher level. LIVING INSTITUTE broke through the traditional barriers and clichés and through a huge material and a deeply involving process they found what we had hoped for – but didn’t know. It all reinforces my belief that culture consciousness and communication is a fundamental tool for future success. It reminds us to never lower our ambitions, to attract the people and partnerships that fit our culture - and it ties and keeps us together.”

Mauricio Graber, CEO at Chr. Hansen A/S

Strategies change, but the culture model remains

“The biggest success is that the four drivers are melting into our language. People relate to them all the time. Like when we talk about compliance and the right level of freedom, without compromising. These drivers help us deal with really complex matters in an almost visual and very dialogue-promoting way. We even take the balance metaphor from the model and use it in other contexts, so it is gaining a life on its own.

All regions are living and breathing the culture model now, and we get a lot of credit for our way of working actively with culture. We are defining a new strategy and next year we are considering a second wave to reinforce the culture model in the light of the new strategy.”

Alice Larsen, CVP HR at Chr. Hansen A/S



Top down and bottom up, a complicated road to a magic tool

"We are still on the journey, cascading the drivers and the balance into all corners of our company. I am proud of the elegantly striking balance between the bottom up process and the top down initiative and wording. The road to the culture model was extremely complicated and very interesting, and it might be the only way to reach this magic point where you recognize something you haven't seen before. It is a great feeling".

Mauricio Graber, CEO at Chr. Hansen A/S

KEYS TO CULTURAL REVIVAL OF COMPANY DNA

In a complicated cultural landscape and a genuinely involving process, LIVING INSTITUTE succeeded in finding the core characteristics and turning them into a simple model, which will challenge the organization for years. The proof of the pudding, when working with values and cultures is that people recognize something, they haven't seen before.

Finding values or cultural drivers in simple as well as very complicated communities can be compared to combining the arts of archaeology and future research. The loyalty to your findings must never be compromised. Neither must the ability to judge whether it is powerful in a future perspective or just an issue of sentimental value or a perishable buzzword.

Many value papers and company culture descriptions remain general and without force, which is why they often end up in drawers where they slowly die. When you succeed in finding the unique characteristics of a culture and through innovative thinking make them come alive, they can work for ages and stay interesting, meaningful and relevant.

During the Chr. Hansen culture process, LIVING INSTITUTE was looking for values or cultural drivers that would be applicable in everyday decision making - and sufficiently complex and universal to inspire far beyond current business challenges.

A strong culture is the backbone of a company; the long-lasting ways of working that live through changes of strategies and business conditions. If the words and description/visualization, you formulate, are not sufficiently rooted and challenging in the long run, they are bound to be forgotten.

REVIVING THE UNIQUE COMPANY CULTURE OF CHR. HANSEN

ABOUT CHR. HANSEN A/S

Chr. Hansen is a global bioscience company that develops natural, innovative solutions for the food, nutritional, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries.

In 2019, Chr. Hansen that was founded in Denmark in 1874 and today employs 3.700 people in more than 32 countries, was ranked as the world's most sustainable company by Corporate Knights in Davos.

SITUATION

LIVING INSTITUTE was chosen by Chr. Hansen to rephrase and future-proof the unique cultural core of the exceptionally growing company. The ambition of the new CEO and his team was to initiate a process that would clarify, revive, strengthen, and share the long-lasting core identity of the company, worldwide.

SOLUTION

Despite an extensive amount of knowledge and passionate impressions, going all the way back to the founders, more than 450 employees involved, and ending up with a truly unique result, the process lasted only four months.

Now, 1 ½ years after the kick-off, all regions of Chr. Hansen are living and breathing the culture model - and cascading continues.

RESULTS

The culture model is expected to actively improve dialogue and decision making 10-20 years ahead, despite changing business conditions and strategies.

SELECTED CLIENTS



LIVING INSTITUTE enable organizations to leverage diversity to meet and exceed business goals. Founded in 2004, we have delivered more than 2000 diversity programs across the world and are now considered a market leader in the field of *applied diversity intelligence* - the practical application of research-based knowledge to promote and manage diversity in a way that delivers tangible business results.

“The culture process gave us something truly unique which is exactly what I asked for. The fact that it was not in-vented, but actually found in our historic roots and hundreds of personal testimonies makes it almost naturally resonate with people - despite the new, creative and stronger expressions. Today, the four cultural drivers on two axes have been woven into our language, our work and our purpose globally. The words belong to us, and the model, the meaning of balance is our constant challenge. I always assumed that culture eats strategy for breakfast. Now I know.”

Mauricio Graber, CEO of Chr. Hansen

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