

Petco: Rebounding Through Trust

The business need

Petco, a specialty retailer of premium pet food, supplies, and services, enjoyed leading the market for years. In 2006, when competition intensified, Petco lost share and was acquired by private equity investors. CEO Jim Myers set the goal to regain the top spot in the market. To do this, he had to gain the trust of the entire company so they could see that his goal was not only possible, but that all associates had a big part to play in the company's success.

The solution

Petco worked with Root to define a transformation plan to make this vision a reality. Leaders wanted to create a culture that promoted teamwork, learning, and fun. To do this, Myers urged his leaders to be very candid about the current state, where they needed to go, and how a new strategy would lead them there.

After a series of interviews, the Root team captured feedback in a humorous yet serious Watercooler™ sketch. The sketch served as a catalyst for a constructive discussion about the current realities, enabling the team to build trust while accepting responsibility for the issues and necessary changes. The result was a united team with an aligned “systems view” of the marketplace who knew what to do to regain leadership.

Petco believed that involving associates in the strategy would lead to loyal customers. They realized that, somewhere along the line, they had stopped listening to people in the field, and the people in the field had stopped telling leadership what they really thought. According to Charlie Piscitello, SVP and Chief People Officer, “These sessions provided the ideal start for taking our message to all 21,000 of our people.”

Results

These sessions gave Petco people a stronger sense of purpose in light of its new vision. When employees knew the plan and realized that the company was trying to do the right things, they saw how much they mattered to Petco's success and how they could influence the outcomes. Many associates said that they transformed from a sense of despair to hope, and hope to belief – and they used that belief to act in the best interests of the company and customers.



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About Root

Root is a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage people as a catalyst for change using a proven framework that consistently achieves clarity, ownership, and results.



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