

# STRAIGHT TALK

## CEO-to-CEO insights

Maximising performance through people and merging workplace cultures are two of the most frequent CEO challenges. Here two leading CEOs give their views.



Alan McGilvray, Chairman & MD, Bayer Australia and New Zealand

### Performance through people:

Bayer Australia and New Zealand's Chairman Et MD

Alan McGilvray

Sometimes, people are the most obvious lever you have to drive performance when you assess your external environment: 'Externally, we were facing a market that was growing in the services sector, but not in our traditional end-use sectors. Population growth is flat, and we are a long way from developing markets.' **Imperatives for a people focus can also come from internal factors.** 'A local employee survey showed up some weaknesses in our local management style. Profits and revenue have been flat. The culture internally was also not great – there was inflexibility, rigidity, conservatism and a silo mentality.' The bottom line? 'If we wanted the business to grow, we had to do something. It wasn't an option to simply continue with "business as usual."'

**Have some specific behavioural goals in mind.** 'We wanted to change the way we interacted within the company from defensive/aggressive to more constructive behaviours. This will change the overall culture of the company, which in turn will drive better performance.' Choose the change program carefully, and make sure it is proven. 'We looked at a lot of methods and programs before we made our choice.'

There are ten-year case studies that prove that the type of constructive organisational culture advocated by Human Synergistics will give sustainable financial results.'

**Make sure outcomes are measurable.** 'You need to be able to measure where you are at now, decide where you want to go, and then measure your progress as you go. That's the beauty of the program. You can measure both an individual's and a company's behavioural characteristics, and how they are changing.' **Make sure your leaders set the example.** 'Our implementation started with myself and top management. Our view is that leadership creates culture, and culture creates performance.' Remember, as always, your own personal example will be decisive. 'I have owned and championed the process, because the reality is that if the CEO is not seen to be fully committed, it simply goes nowhere.'

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