



Overcoming long-standing resistance to change to allow diversification and growth

Organization

Superior Water and Air

Industry

Installation and Service

Servicing over 130,000 homes, Superior Air and Water is one of the largest and most respected independent and family-operated water treatment, plumbing, and heating and air dealers in the United States

Challenge

Superior Water and Air is a plumbing, heating and air conditioning business founded in 1956. Rob Anderson, a senior Superior employee, and a partner, Mark Combourn, purchased Superior in 2007. While Superior was a solid company when Rob and Mark bought it, the company was small and wasn't growing. Rob, who was now CEO, wanted to grow the business, but felt stuck in how to go about doing so, especially with a workforce that he considered stagnant and complacent. He then also discovered that his company was suffering from fundamental business deficiencies. Rob knew that he needed to find a way to change the way the each employee operated if he wanted to remedy the company's deficiencies and grow the business.

Solution

It was then that Rob discovered the work of Arbinger Training and Consulting. After learning about Arbinger's work, he decided to embed Arbinger's outward mindset approach within Superior to help him meet his objectives. Not only were all Superior employees trained in the Arbinger way of working, but Rob made a personal commitment to lead by example, changing the way that he himself worked, managed and conducted meetings. Rob went so far as to become certified to train Superior's employees in the Arbinger methods, and began leading internal company workshops himself.

Results

As a result of these efforts, Arbinger quickly became a core part of Superior's company culture and the resultant change was, according to Rob, "immediate and obvious." Internally and most immediately, Superior employees began communicating and working with each other far more effectively. Each individual employee also began to reconceive his or her work in terms of the impact of that work on their fellow employees and Superior's customers.

This reconception of their work led to a better understanding of customer needs and a desire to exceed the expectations of Superior's customers. According to Rob, "The way we look at our customers has been transformed. Consequently, the way we treat them is different as well." This transformative thinking has also eliminated employee resistance to change and encouraged the sharing of innovative ideas. These ideas allowed Superior, a company that had historically focused on one core product line for over forty years, to introduce over five new, but complimentary, product lines in the span of only 6 years.

According to Rob "without Arbinger, Superior would still be focused on one core product and have a small and stagnant workforce. Because of Arbinger, Superior has grown every year. The business has tripled in size and, despite a general economic downturn, Superior Water and Air is now experiencing more financial growth and stability than ever before."

Today, servicing over 130,000 homes, Superior Water and Air is one of the largest and most respected independent and family-operated water treatment, plumbing, and heating and air dealers in the United States.

"Arbinger has forced us to take a look at everything we do how we interact, how we hold ourselves accountable, and how we take care of our customers. Most people believe that what we have accomplished is impossible. But I believe we have been able to do it because of Arbinger."

Rob Anderson
CEO
Superior Water & Air