

# A Story of a Market Leader Left Behind: Unlearning Past Success by Building on Current Strengths



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**The corporate VPs met alone to discuss how to move the executive team forward. They felt all the necessary building blocks to transform the company were in place. The enterprise software installation was working well, the reorganization into four market groups was a step in the right direction, but it was only one step. They needed the executive team to fully commit to a culture change.**

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The VPs decided the only way to address the power struggles was to dismantle historic fiefdoms. So, the VPs decided the engineering functions needed to be split into four groups, and each assigned to a specific market segment. The new market segment groups were not led by engineering executives, but by operations and service executives.

Consequently, the composition of the executive team changed. The new additions to the team— veterans of the successful years—understood Devcn’s strengths and were also eager to embrace the new direction of competing by collaborating with customers. They embraced the company’s engineering expertise, insisted that the company continue investing in engineering expertise, and dismantled the old power bases. They also were able to reinforce the legacy of outstanding engineering which was at the core of Devcn’s identity.

*“The staff was ready to heal the wounds of the past.”*

The next step was a strategic planning process for all staff. The executive team developed an operational strategy to execute the new vision and direction. They rolled out the operational plan to the entire staff and encouraged discussion. The intensity of the staffs’ questions and their willingness to challenge the assumptions in the plan was a pleasant surprise. The feedback verified the findings of the diagnostic results.

The executive team wanted the entire company to understand the true strength of the company had been their willingness to develop new ideas and that the collaborative-engineering, customer-relationship direction was as new and as powerful an idea as their breakthrough engineering developments of the past. The staff was clear that coordination was something few knew how to do well and thus a skill and mindset which everyone needed to learn. They asked for town hall meetings to thoroughly discuss the company’s direction and focus, facilitated discussion groups to resolve the old power struggles between supporters of the old operating model and proponents of the new. The minutes of the discussion were shared throughout the company to ensure everyone understood others’ perspectives.

The staff was ready to heal the wounds of the past. Collaboration was the approach to create a new wave of technological success. They wanted to become as successful at collaboration as they had been at competition with each other. They took the old Devcn paradigm and turned it on its side. All the strengths of the p

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