



From a Company with Potential to a High Performance Company

CMI coaches MBX Systems toward complete improvement



In the Beginning

Once a small company, MBX Systems has come a long way.

The company opened its doors in 1995 as “Drive Express.”

The firm quickly expanded business, changed the name to “Drive and Motherboard Express,” then shortened it again a year later to “Motherboard Express.” After continued and steady growth, the company settled on the name MBX Systems. Located in Wauconda, Illinois, MBX Systems has established itself as the leader in software conversion for video on demand, firewall, spam filtering, network management and other applications to the appliance market.

Like many successful companies, MBX encountered roadblocks, mostly fueled by growth. The corporation has had various issues including lack of teamwork, flat growth, little organizational structure, a lack of business values, and no formal planning process. These issues prompted the company to examine its condition. Thankfully, MBX was referred to CMI. Tom Crowley, the founder and CEO of MBX, learned about CMI through a friend and client of CMI. “My friend, Leo Sheridan and I were talking about our businesses and he asked me about my goals and objectives. When I gave him a blank stare, he gave me Bruce’s contact information and said that it was probably a good idea that I call him.” Tom accepted.



CMI stepped into the world of MBX in 1999. Tom spoke with Bruce Hodes, CEO and founder of CMI, and had an initial interview to determine needs. Tom recalls, “Bruce asked many hard questions to gauge where we were. As uncomfortable as it was, I knew that I needed this type of direction and coaching.” Though the early stages of the process were challenging, MBX was committed to their purpose, “to offer a buying experience for the customer and a work experience to employees that is engaging and fulfilling and to practice humility, generosity and service to others.” By working with Bruce Hodes and CMI, the team hoped to exhibit operational excellence, superior customer service and stand behind their name as a great company.

Crucial Issues at MBX

The three critical issues that hampered MBX’s progress were lack of goals, staffing and adequate communication. First, the company struggled to develop goals and objectives. The management style was based on experience and instinct. They operated without the aid of any useful instruments and had no real accountability and direction. Second, there were unsatisfactory staffing procedures. There were no values utilized in hiring and recruiting. This allowed for poor hiring practices, high rate of turnover and overall lack of teamwork. Lastly, the CEO lacked necessary leadership skills. This lack of leadership created challenges for the future and left the Leadership Team with an uncertainty about the direction the company was headed.

Getting Started



Bruce met with the Executive Management Team and Core Leadership Group to begin “Breakthrough Business Planning”, commonly referred to as “huddles.” The Leadership Team met to discuss every significant issue plaguing the company-goals, objectives, vision, values, hiring, management structure, employee development, teambuilding and operational successes and failures. They also participated in what CMI calls, “stupid games.” These games are a simulation of the workplace and are designed to provide a learning experience. They show companies how things operate “back at the ranch” and guide employees on how to improve communication and teamwork. The Leadership Team took a firm grasp onto these issues. Justin Formella, Web & IT Director, certainly appreciated the intervention. “This approach has been instrumental in changing our thought process to everyday problems and issues. The collaboration helped to create a team atmosphere that was otherwise not present.”

In addition to the strategies, conversations and games, the deliberate and constant activities and follow up meetings all contributed to strengthening MBX. “These activities insure that we are paying attention and moving forward toward our strategic goals,” says Tom Crowley.

Time for a Change

The MBX family has had a positive reaction to Bruce and CMI. MBX’s Chief Operating Officer, Jill Bellak comments, “Sometimes everyone dreads the sessions because we all get so busy with what we’re doing that our schedules seem too full. However, once the meeting begins, we cover many issues and leave with a sense of accomplishment. Every time we meet with Bruce, we



never fail to make a connection.” Formella adds, “Our Leadership Group reacts very positively. The huddles and planning sessions gets others engaged and fosters an ambiance of openness. Bruce has helped to boost morale and put together a structure.” Bruce challenges team members to talk to each other openly, directly and constructively. This type of work creates a connection between team members and causes them to improve their work relationships.

Since CMI began working with MBX in 1999, Crowley states that improvements have been made “everywhere” in the company. “There were things that were easier to fix in the beginning like goals and objectives. As we improved throughout the years, the struggles we faced were more difficult and complex.” MBX has made substantial changes in their planning process, discipline, goals, and overall focus. MBX has been pleased to recommend CMI to other companies. Crowley says, “I have recommended CMI to other companies many times...simply because it has worked for us!”

Today, MBX Systems meets with CMI 8-9 times a year to make continuous advancements. The company remains committed to operational excellence and superior customer service. While staying busy converting software, they persistently continue to convert themselves into being a high performance company.