

## Case Story: “Culture Change in an International Financial Telecommunications Company”

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### Context

Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), is a global member-owned cooperative and the world’s leading provider of secure financial messaging services. SWIFT is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium and maintains operating centers in Europe and the US. It is an information technology and software-centered endeavor.

SWIFT’s messaging services are used by more than 11,000 financial institutions in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. The cooperative processes over 6 billion messages a year and has maintained a reliability performance of 99.999% up-time.

### Challenge

Although all performance indicators were exceptional, SWIFT faced increasing levels of competition and increasing demands from clients.

The internal culture, while very high in professional and technical competence, valued performance within silos to the detriment of the larger organization when it needed to respond quickly to increasing and changing client expectations.

SWIFT recognized the need to build a more responsive end-to-end process with a more collaborative approach across organizational boundaries and more effective cross-functional project teams.

### What We Did

The Delphi Group, Inc. designed a spaced-interval, training process in four modules. The training was delivered to 200-plus middle and upper-level technicians and managers at multiple locations in the United States and Europe. Training groups included representatives from across the organization. Three modules were three-day off-site events with executives attending dinner for Q&A and reinforcement of this training.

The off-site training included topics such as: describing current and desired culture, mapping the SWIFT end-to-end process, creating systems diagrams, clarifying characteristics of open vs closed systems, building effective project teams, practicing effective interaction skills, identifying opportunities for improved working relationships and focusing communications on enhanced throughput to achieve client needs.

Between training sessions, participants completed assignments to reinforce learning and addressed specific topics with their immediate managers and interface counterparts.

Module 4 was totally devoted to the work each participant did on an actual, current challenge. Participants presented their initiatives and results and received coaching from their colleagues.

The Delphi Group was also engaged to assist an internal cross-functional team in analyzing the results of internal surveys of culture and climate and to frame recommendations to the President and top Executive Team.

### Outcomes

- Improved effectiveness of functional and cross-functional work teams and project teams.
- Anecdotal evidence of culture change, more collaborative relationships and use of process skills across the organization.
- Subsequent surveys confirmed evidence of culture and climate improvement.
- Improved responsiveness to client demands and enhanced service features.