



FREE TO GROW

Igniting purpose, passion and potential for growth



Helps employees find the 'HERO' within

Background

APL Cartons (Pty) Ltd is a significant player in the corrugated manufacturing industry and is committed to supplying high-quality cartons while offering excellent quality, service and value.

Challenges

The corrugated industry is highly competitive, with an increase in the number of new market entrants as a result of the vertical integration of paper mills into corrugated plants. In an attempt to increase their competitiveness and promote employee wellness, APL partnered with Free To Grow, a leading specialist in the field of employee engagement, to create a culture that encourages employee involvement and ownership.

Approach

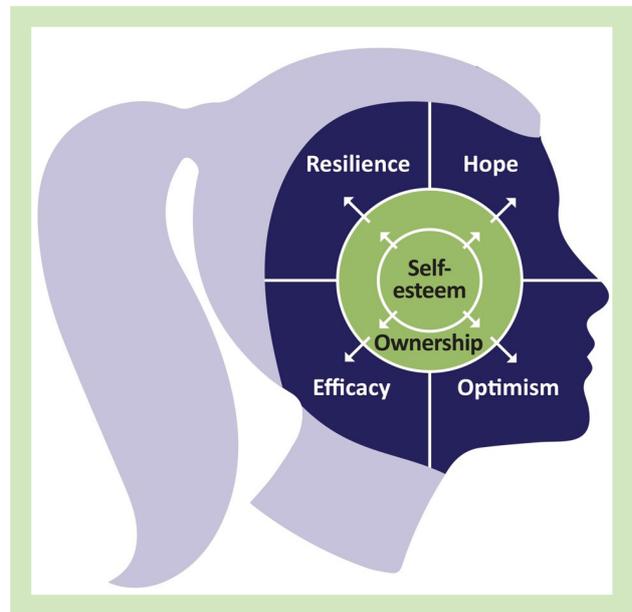
To understand APL's context and assist in unlocking employee potential, in-depth conversations and focus groups were conducted with different stakeholders across the organisation. This allowed Free To Grow to customise selected employee engagement and personal wellbeing programmes to build psychological capital and individual engagement readiness to address the challenges and needs identified.

Building PsyCap and engagement through WorkQ®

At the heart of personal wellbeing and employee engagement is PsyCap, or psychological capital, which consists of the 'simultaneous presence of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism'. Comprising of three journeys – personal, work and organisation – **WorkQ®** is designed to shape a positive self-esteem and bolster these qualities within employees.

- The 'personal journey' helped employees see their potential, deal with emotional baggage and identify and fully utilise their strengths
- The 'work journey', encouraged employees to find value and meaning in their work, engage in conversations and take responsibility for their learning
- The 'organisation's journey' focused on aligning employees with the purpose, picture and plan of the organisation, as well and the part employees needed to play in helping APL achieve success

These journeys encouraged employees to focus on what is 'in' rather than what is 'out' of their control, helping them move from a locus of making excuses and placing blame to one of ownership, in both their personal and professional lives.



Developing personal & financial wellness through the Money Journey

Financial wellness is an important facet of personal wellbeing. This prompted APL to rollout a one-day Money Journey workshop to help employees to take control of their personal finances. Following on from **WorkQ®**, this programme aided employees in coming to grips with budget techniques, debt management and saving. Again, the focus was on increasing employees' self-confidence, efficacy and hope by equipping them with the skills to handle money more effectively, and in turn improve their situation.

Impact

Impact on the various states of employees PsyCap

	Impact	Example
Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in goal-directed energy and planning to meet personal goals and work targets ● Greater courage and self-belief to achieve goals ● Increase in confidence and motivation to think more resourcefully and come up with innovative ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budgeting, saving and studying further ● Discretionary effort – brought on by APL's initiatives, learners programmes and opportunities for development <p>“I try to approach everything with a positive mindset. I'm not only happier in my work, but respect and empathise with others.”</p> <p>Rachel Afrika employee</p>
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking on increased responsibility ● Approaching colleagues and leaders to ask for support and share ideas – in spite of the organisational hierarchy and perceive pushback from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-regulation of working hours – instead of being managed by a 'clock-in' system ● Communicating with first-line leaders and expressing opinions at monthly meetings <p>“Free To Grow have given people a voice and the confidence to use it.” Michelle Syster employee</p>
Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking greater satisfaction with the success in their current lives ● Adopting a future-orientated outlook and long-term planning ● Strong desire to continue utilising opportunities to grow, develop and apply learnings in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive encouragement of other employees and team members ● More tolerate of past mistakes and increased understanding, patience and empathy <p>“Through Free To Grow we realised we have great people. We are not here to work alone, we are here to work together.”</p> <p>Paul de Kock Operator</p>
Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in the conviction and confidence to use their cognitive resources and motivation to successfully execute a task ● Positive feedback and self-belief aroused through the training 	<p>“WorkQ® helped me grow as an individual, it made me think about my attitude at work and how I deal with others.”</p> <p>“It has been helpful for us to use the training space to elaborate on our goals and objectives and gain continued clarity on how we are going to practice the principles we have learned.”</p> <p>Jisri Joseph Operator</p>

Impact in the organisation

As encouraging as these signs of growth in PsyCap are, organisations want to see a greater return on investment for the time and money spent on training and development. In other words, growth in PsyCap must be seen to ripple through to a change in employee attitude and behaviour in the workplace. Answering the call of Senior Management to think out the box and find new ways to improve systems, a group of APL employees drew on their newly developed PsyCap to coin the 'Path Finder's Concept'. This employee driven-innovation centres on the after-hours use of APL machinery to produce more output (increased products and brand awareness) for the organisation, and at the same time generate additional revenue for themselves (increased financial benefits). This is one example of how enhanced PsyCap encouraged employee participation and ownership, moving APL one step closer to embedding its Signature Brand.



The Path Finders group at APL get ready to turn bright ideas into business solutions.

Key enablers

Deep-rooted values

Firmly grounded in the values of openness, trust and high levels of service, APL is a business that prides itself on ethical behaviour and integrity. APL's demonstrated commitment to honour these values has inspired a deeper connection within employees who believe that APL cares for them, and about them. This alignment of values was demonstrated during a recent wage negotiation.

“Every year, APL provides the workers union with a letter of employment which they accept, without opening, on good faith. The roles reversed in 2015 when the union delivered a letter of its own. With ground rules in place, APL accepted the letter under the same conditions, only to find that the union had suggested poorer conditions of employment. To demonstrate our commitment to employees APL tore up the agreement and provided workers with the original higher offer.” **Jacques Matthee HR Manager**

Senior management vision for innovative policies

Guided by the vision of “nothing is impossible”, Managing Director Frederick Greeff communicated his desire to build APL's Signature Brand and become a benchmark organisation in the industry. This message was a key theme of **WorkQ®** and helped employees understand the organisation's strategic objectives and their contribution therein.

Growth opportunities and personal transformation

APL is aware that in order to harness employee voice and involvement, a culture of engagement must first be created. It further recognises that to motivate ownership, solutions need to be driven by the people. To grow the PsyCap employees require to shape positive behaviour and fully utilise APL's initiatives, the organisation implemented a series of growth concepts and development opportunities.

“There are fantastic concepts, challenges and training provided by APL, this makes us feel valued, allows us to enhance our skillset and want to give back.” **Shelvin Hess Operator**

Conclusion

With the help of Free To Grow APL has embarked on its growth path and inspired employees to become a ‘HERO’ within their own sphere of control, putting their energy and focus behind what is important to the organisation and contributing fully, not because they have to, but because they want to.