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Culture Change at Genentech:

ACCELERATING STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Jennifer Chatman

This case study describes the culture change process and positive outcomes at one of Genentech's largest divisions, Immunology and Ophthalmology (GIO). Senior Vice President Jennifer Cook worked with her team to develop a culture that would tie together four brands that previously were not in the same division. Despite various challenges along the way, Cook pursued a culture change approach with definitive and relatively rapid outcomes. This is a story of the role of leaders in undertaking and inspiring major culture change. (Keywords: Case Study, Corporate Culture, Leadership, Organizational Change)

“My leadership philosophy is that individuals are people first and employees second. Our best employees make a choice to come to work every day and we have to earn the right to have them want to come back. . . . The way I look at it is that I'm bringing a framework and infrastructure as a way to harness the group's thinking, but it's their thinking.”—Jennifer Cook, SVP GIO

Jennifer Cook, Senior Vice President of the Immunology and Ophthalmology (GIO) business unit at Genentech sat at her desk in South San Francisco, California, while preparing to meet with her Executive Leadership Team.¹ Cook, an MBA from the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, had risen rapidly at Genentech since her graduation in 1998.

In 2009, she became the leader of GIO within Genentech, a 35-year-old leading biotechnology company that discovers, develops, manufactures, and commercializes medicines to treat patients with serious or life-threatening medical conditions. Also in 2009, Genentech became a wholly owned member of the Roche Group, a Swiss pharmaceutical giant. Genentech focused on five therapeutic areas—Oncology,

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Immunology, Neuroscience, Metabolism, and Infectious Diseases—and had over 11,000 employees in the United States.

Cook's relatively new GIO division included four products/franchises: Actemra[®] (rheumatoid arthritis), Rituxan[®] (rheumatoid arthritis), Lucentis[®] (wet age-related macular degeneration, an eye disease), and Xolair[®] (allergic asthma). Cook's boss, Ian Clark, formerly head of the Commercial Division, had become CEO of Genentech about a year before Cook became head of GIO.

When Cook entered her new job, she knew she had a challenging path ahead of her. The four brands she inherited were all very different—with different histories, different cultures, and in various stages of development. Xolair and Rituxan were mature Genentech brands with modest growth prospects and a strong sense of history and identity; Lucentis was a Genentech brand with a robust lifecycle, significant growth potential, and an already-strong culture; and Actemra was a Roche brand in launch mode with an extensive lifecycle, significant growth potential, but culture and product launch challenges. Adding to these differences, the merging of the four brands occurred amidst the Roche-Genentech merger that led to layoffs, disruption, and uncertainty, as well as multiple leadership changes in 2010.

Because of the disparate franchises and upheavals, Cook felt it was especially critical to embark on a culture change process in order to be successful over the long run. She believed that identifying and establishing GIO's culture would enable GIO to deliver business results and help the organization realize its vision. In fact, at every major position Cook had held at Genentech prior to GIO, she had instituted a culture change process.

As Cook headed into a conference room to meet with her team, she took a deep breath and prepared to face all the potential skeptics that were typical during the initial phase of a culture change effort. She was also keenly aware of the new challenges she faced in managing a group of over 500 people who were spread across the United States. Numerous questions filled her head, such as how to effectively bring this team together, what might affect GIO's performance, what features of culture were at play, and what stood in the way of positive change?

Gaining Valuable Culture Experience

Prior to leading GIO, Cook had gained valuable experience initiating culture-related efforts in other parts of Genentech. In 2000, in a small department of 15 people called Market Planning, she applied the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP), a quantitative assessment of an organization's culture developed by three university professors² as part of a process to assess the department's organizational culture. Her goal was to bring that team together and give them a sense of shared purpose. This process helped to determine what the group stood for and how they could better deliver on their business goals by working toward the culture they desired.

“We did the audit and got clear and actionable results,” said Cook. “New leaders have since guided that group, staying true to the organizational culture work we began. Today the group has grown to 75 people, yet the foundations of their culture persist and support them in delivering strong performance.”

In 2006, Cook launched another culture effort in a portfolio management group that started with 85 people and grew to 200 people a few years into the process. She once again used the OCP to assess the current and desired future cultures aligned to the group’s business purpose. The group had four departments that were highly interdependent, yet began with the impression that they did not have much in common. The effort lasted three years and was organized and driven through volunteer workgroups created with specific initiatives around driving culture change.

“This was the first time I had created workgroups because we wanted people to get involved and work on what they cared about,” said Cook. Two years into the effort, she re-surveyed the group and found that the specific culture attributes they were working on had improved significantly.

Context: No Common Identity

When Cook took over GIO, the four franchises had been independently “doing fine” in terms of sales numbers. “But as a group, they didn’t have a strong sense of shared identity,” said Cook. “The groups of franchises had been organized largely based on workload. The Oncology business unit has franchises that all have oncology products, so they already have a built-in sense of identity. The other groups like GIO do not.”

Given her assessment, Cook felt that despite obvious differences and a lack of cohesiveness, “why not find out what unites us, what we have in common, and what could be helpful to us?” She didn’t want to “fabricate” something, but wanted to find opportunities to see how the franchises might share knowledge and help each other out.

“We had to merge two organizations (Roche and Genentech) and at the same time, we were bringing this business unit together,” said Khurem Farooq, head of Rheumatology. Roche’s stated culture was not so different from Genentech’s, with Roche focusing on integrity, courage, and passion while Genentech was known for focus on science, patients, and people. In truth, however, the organizations were quite different based on their very different histories and norms.

Farooq added: “Actemra and Rituxan, the two groups in my franchise, didn’t really cooperate and came from two very distinct backgrounds in terms of how they think. It wasn’t so much the what, but the how. And there were certain degrees of animosity with one team being the Roche team and the other being the Genentech team, with products that had very recently been positioned as direct competitors. There were some hangover effects from the merger.” Cook added: “The Lucentis team had been working on culture for a long time already and were close to their desired state, but the Actemra team had the most challenges due to the amount of change they had been through.”

Ashwin Datt, GIO's operations lead, provided context on Genentech's culture and the impact on the merger with Roche: "It's funny because one of the things Genentech sells itself on is its culture, but did we focus a lot of time on culture? No, it was pervasive but implicit. In fact, we are a very science-driven organization and focus on using data to make decisions—you can argue with my interpretation, but you can't argue with the data. We have a very work hard, play hard culture—a casual intensity. Our culture didn't come to the forefront until Roche acquired Genentech and then all of a sudden, everyone was focused on not losing our culture. But up until that point, no one really talked about it because everyone knew it was to focus on patients and to make a difference."

The year before Cook took the helm at GIO, the prior team had "drafted a new vision statement, but it hadn't really taken hold yet," according to Cook. "The feedback I was getting was that, 'we still feel like a team of teams.' But people wanted a greater sense of community. Every time I encounter a team of teams as a new leader, I try to give people a choice in case they want to stay that way, but the answer has never been that they want to stay that way. People like to be a part of something bigger, part of a bigger network with greater opportunities to learn, move, and develop."

A Grassroots Approach: Engaging the Entire Organization

Getting Senior Leaders Onboard

Cook first focused on engaging leaders and line managers to embark on a project to define GIO's desired culture. Without the leaders on board, "it's never going to happen," said Farooq. In the fall of 2010, Cook held a GIO Senior Leader Kickoff meeting with 12 participants to discuss the culture efforts and to get buy-in. Franchise heads such as Farooq and John Snisarenko, head of Ophthalmology (Lucentis) were a part of this meeting. At the time, Farooq was also temporarily leading the Respiratory franchise (Xolair).

Cook asked senior leaders what they and the organization needed. What came out of those conversations was a surprisingly clear shared sense of identity and purpose. She said: "The big challenge was how we think about coming together for a group that sees each other so rarely and that is so varied." The culture work that Cook had done in her prior organizations had people that not only worked together in the same cities, but also on the same floors. "That was easier because we were literally seeing each other in the halls every day," she said. "For GIO, I felt there was a huge level of ambiguity and uncertainty in terms of our culture work and we had to take a lot of chances."

Farooq added: "We talked about the fact that the franchises essentially existed on their own, that there was no real common goal or common value set that brought them together. We were all a part of the GIO business unit, but what are the commonalities that bring us together because the products don't as much when compared to oncology."

Although Cook knew she would face skeptics related to culture, given its many potential meanings and the ubiquitous use of the word, her senior team felt

very positively about culture. Farooq said: “When Jennifer told us about her culture efforts in her previous group and the possibility of doing that at GIO, I jumped on the opportunity because I could see the problems that I had in my franchise where I had two separate teams in two different places. We needed a common goal.”

Around that time, Cook also hired a third-party consulting firm, The Trium Group, to conduct interviews, focus groups, and gather personal stories with 35 participants within GIO. Bart Block, Lucentis sales representative and one of the 35 interviewees, said: “They asked us a lot of questions about the Genentech culture and its implications, as well as how it drove an individual and what was important about it.”

Engaging All of GIO: “You Choose It”

After getting her senior leaders onboard, Cook began to roll the culture effort out to the broader team since she wanted and knew she needed to engage the entire GIO organization to help define the culture. In the fall of 2010, she introduced the concept to the entire organization through multiple onstage communications and workshops. “This was daunting,” she said. “I had to explain what culture is, why are we doing this, and how are we going to approach it. There were a number of skeptical people who had heard about culture too many times before, and understandably they had a ‘flavor of the day’ cynicism. I had to directly acknowledge those doubts and try to convince them the change could be real this time. I also knew the only way to really convince people was to demonstrate the change, not just talk about it.”

Datt agreed that some people were cynical about culture: “There were a lot of people in the organization who felt that they had heard this culture business before and it was loud enough that we acknowledged that. People also said that they had real problems and wanted real solutions to fix those problems.”

In her communications to all of GIO, Cook focused on what brought the franchises together. According to Datt: “People could have come away with a feeling that we were just put together because Genentech has bio-oncology and everything else not in bio-oncology. I’m not saying that was how the decision was made, but to be fair, it was close. But it does make sense to put the new emerging areas together and what Jennifer did was to take the time to really understand and look for commonalities. We are all in a chronic disease environment, we have a lot of opportunities to impact patients, we all have competition in our brands, and we all have challenges to explain to our healthcare practitioners and payers on our value propositions. Early on, the focus was to sort out the vision of GIO.”

Moreover, Cook chose to combat cynicism with ownership. One of Cook’s initial frustrations was that everyone kept calling the culture effort “Jennifer’s culture.” “I tried to shift that sense of ownership and accountability to them. After all, the culture was chosen by them, defined by them, based on their vision of what it would take for us to be successful,” said Cook.

“I kept repeating, ‘You choose it,’ which became a theme because our culture is made up of all the choices individuals within it make every day,” she said.

“It’s not about what I say that shows up on a piece of paper or that we stick on a website. It’s about what our people literally choose to do every day, and if we’re not making the choices that are aligned to what we say matters, then we’re not living this culture.”

Cook added: “Employees already know what they want. They know what they wish for and what they think would be a good culture, but they don’t really have a way to communicate it and they may not even be conscious of it—it could be subliminal, but it is there. I like the idea of harnessing what is in their minds, because we hire extraordinary people, true knowledge workers. Why not ask them what they think?”

A GIO-Wide Survey

As part of this process, Cook conducted a GIO-wide survey with 550 employees in September (GIO met as a group in September and January each year) to “get data and try to understand it.” The survey³ and process was a tool that asked respondents to rank 54 validated, standard attributes of culture from “most” to “least” characteristic for both the current GIO culture and GIO’s future desired culture. There were 13 higher dimensions that these 54 attributes rolled up to: courageous, focus on people, team focus, drive for results, integrity, conflict oriented, intensity, relaxed, detail oriented, transparency, patient oriented, decisive, and stable.

For example, under the dimension “intensity” were the attributes *being aggressive, hard driving, fast moving, urgency, and competitive*. And under focus on people were *being people-oriented, being supportive, respect for individuals, and sharing information freely*. Future desired attributes were values that were strategically important if GIO was to be successful in future years. Sixty-four percent of the 550 employees responded to the survey.

Cook took a data-driven and analytical approach, which was unusual in the realm of culture. According to Datt: “Jennifer wanted to use data to help us think about what matters. From my experience even within Genentech where other organizations have tried to do culture change, what is unique about the GIO process is that she took what is at the very heart of who we are as a company—being science driven, being data driven, having a hypothesis, as well as running an experiment—and said that if we do that with culture to support our business objectives, what would we do?”

Four Cultural Pillars⁴

Based on the GIO-wide survey, high levels of agreement existed. The overall current culture profile showed a .90 level of agreement (this indicator can, in theory, range from 0–1.0) indicating that adding additional data would be unlikely to change the profile. The future desired culture showed even higher agreement at .95 for what the GIO culture would be if GIO were fully executing on its strategy. The four dimensions that had the greatest gaps between GIO’s current and future culture became the four “Cultural Pillars.”

These four areas were those that everyone at GIO wanted in their culture: patient orientation, focus on people, courage/innovation, and integrity. The two dimensions that people wanted to see less emphasized in the future desired GIO culture compared to the current culture were “intensity” and “drive for results.”

Cook said: “The way I read the survey results was that people already understood that they’re on the hook to drive results. We’re a sales and marketing team and we know we’re accountable for a revenue number. But our people want to be more inspired; the four things we wanted more of are all inspirational, and the two we wanted less of are more basic business terms. Interestingly, if people are given an opportunity to work on something they care about and that could make a difference, they don’t see that as demanding intensity and drive; they see it as opportunity. This isn’t about how hard people are willing to work. They’re willing to work ridiculously hard. It’s the difference between what you tell them to do versus what you let them do.”

More Senior Leader Alignment: A New Vision and Placemats

After Cook received the survey results, she met with her Extended Leadership Team⁵ at an offsite meeting at the end of October 2010 to discuss the results and formulate a new GIO vision together. During this meeting, the group also discussed culture, its link to business strategy, reviewed the survey results, and broke into groups to discuss the culture gap analysis.

The new vision the team came up with was: “GIO is a *highly skilled team* of sales and marketing professionals who have the *passion and adaptability* to succeed in our complex health care environment. We bring breakthrough medicines that provide maximum *lifetime impact* to patients suffering from chronic immunologic and ophthalmologic diseases.”

The vision statement used “our people’s words,” said Cook. “This team took reams of survey and focus group information and assembled a vision statement out of our employees’ words. We didn’t want to collect our senior leaders in a room and just state our vision. A lot of vision statements seem to be about the leader. We wanted to take the prior statement and make it more inspirational and connect more to what we identified that we care about in order to make it more meaningful.”

In December 2010, Cook met with her Extended Leadership Team to more fully articulate the new GIO vision and to drill down further into the survey results to “build out” the cultural pillars. This meeting was part of a series of meetings with a training group hired to move things forward.

At this meeting, the team developed “placemats” (a term they coined because the sheets were laminated for use in the meetings) for each pillar that provided a definition of each pillar, behaviors and outcomes, mindset shifts, and evidence. For example, the Focus on People pillar provided this definition: “In GIO our people are the foundation for our success—we support and develop them to take on our unique market challenges; we respect each other, highlight opportunities for advancement, and recognize achievements.”

An example of a behavior was: “Give feedback that helps people get an accurate picture of not only their strengths, but also what’s holding them back.” And an example of a mindset shift towards a more intentional culture: “I believe the best way to reward people is to create opportunities for them to grow and advance in ways that inspire and fulfill them.”

On the placemats, Cook felt it was important that they were very specific to GIO’s needs because words like “people focus” or “integrity” can seem quite generic. “I love the placemat for Courage/Innovation in that the words on the placemat include persistence and creativity, not what you would think of necessarily. Creativity for innovation, yes, but persistence is a different word than courage. Yet, those are the specific words that we need because of the business we’re in—with our products for chronic diseases, you have to overcome many biases and a multitude of choices physicians have at their disposal, as well as what can sometimes be a lack of urgency; this contrasts with an area like oncology where patients may have only months to live and fewer therapeutic choices.”

In early January 2011, Cook went further into the organization and held a meeting with GIO Line Managers (88 participants during the Sales and Marketing Manager’s Meeting—SAMM) for manager buy-in and to present the results from the survey. She also rolled out the new vision statement to these managers as a test drive before the larger annual National Sales Meeting that would include all employees a few weeks later. The goal was to generate personal insights and commitment before going to the rest of the organization. Tara Jewett, division sales manager in rheumatology and prior associate director of Business Unit Operations said: “The prior meeting with senior leaders was critical for alignment before going into this January manager meeting because the senior leaders were going to facilitate the SAMM meeting.”

Rollout: a GIO-Wide Workshop

Shortly thereafter, in late January at the National Sales Meeting, Cook presented the results of the GIO-wide survey to all the GIO employees and then went straight into a workshop with over 500 people to pinpoint the specific actions that would shift the culture.

Cook had the entire GIO organization brainstorm ideas around culture levers that Professor Jennifer Chatman had provided Cook and GIO had tailored—Performance Management, Communication, Reward & Recognition, Training, and Recruiting.

“We adopted these levers knowing that they would work to change behavior,” said Cook. “These levers are very people-oriented and that’s the point.” Jewett added: “These change levers are a framework on how to operationalize change in each one of the pillars.” At the meeting, Cook gave the organization small simple cards that listed the five levers and asked everyone to pick a lever they were interested in and propose a tactic. As a result, the groups were mixed with people from different franchises across GIO.

Then, four ballrooms were organized into cross-franchise teams with three senior leaders and a Trium Group representative in each room. The facilitators' goal was to "inspire possibility about what we can create together in GIO in terms of our business and culture." Their objectives were to "clarify how culture shows up in our daily work" and to help "brainstorm ideas about how we can reinforce GIO's desired culture."⁶

People brainstormed ideas such as putting patients versus sales numbers first in e-mail communications. "We wanted to get people using this concept and to realize it's not ambiguous or fuzzy, but actually quite tangible and day-to-day," said Cook.

At the end of the workshop, everyone received a bracelet on which the four pillars were printed—one of many efforts to make the four pillars omnipresent.

"We were nervous about doing a workshop for 500+ people, but we did it anyway," said Cook. "Logistics alone were complicated, and we worried that people would be frustrated if their ideas weren't put to use. In the end, the workshop meeting was a huge success and the team received 500+ ideas that The Trium Group, along with Jewett, helped organize and synthesize into 50 concepts called "The Nifty 50." Jewett said: "The message to us was that people wanted to be more inspired, to feel valued, and to see the right behaviors role modeled consistently."

On the process, Jewett said: "We took the 500 ideas and grouped them not only by the pillars, but also by the change levers within those pillars. From there, themes rose to the top in terms of the volume or intensity of demand." A few ideas were: "Open meetings with a quick patient story," "Create GIO 'culture corner' on the GIO Portal," and "Introduce culture awards related to our four cultural pillars."

On the levers, Cook said: "I like to say that the tool [and the levers] is a catalyst, but not an answer. The value was in the discussions we had because words are just words. What does 'needing more integrity' actually mean? We were already really patient-focused, but people said we needed to be more patient-focused, so what did that mean? We had to take apart the meaning and dive into it as the first step. The tool gives you a quantitative, tangible, and trackable set of things to talk about, but it doesn't give you the answer. That's still up to the group to figure out."

Datt felt that this workshop was a very structured approach to leveraging people in the organization, engaging people so that ideas come out, communicating to the organization, and filtering ideas through them, as well as allowing people to sign up and volunteer [below]. "This is something I hadn't experienced before," he said.

Also at the workshop meeting, Cook and her team rolled out the vision, goals, and culture or "all the rest of it." It was part of the plan to have the vision, goals, and culture all described at one time. "They have to relate," she said.

The goals were things that the team "could only achieve together" by 2015: 300,000 patients (provide breakthrough biologic treatments to 300,000 patients suffering from chronic immune system and ophthalmology diseases); 3 franchises (through 3 therapeutic franchises: Rheumatology, Respiratory, and Ophthalmology); and \$3 billion and will reach \$1 billion in annual revenues across each franchise).

The vision connected to the culture and to GIO's 2015 goals. "From the outset, Jennifer framed culture in the context of the business objectives," said Datt. "From the get go, it was about articulating what makes GIO and how we are different from the other business units. She was very mindful and structured in her approach to discuss the benefits of the different franchises being together as a business unit, and from there taking the staff forward to focus on the goals and objectives that we have to deliver over the next three to five years that are going to be critical for success for Genentech and Roche."

Putting Culture Change into Action

Cook's team then organized cross-franchise initiative teams around the change levers and the key initiatives the senior leaders had culled from the GIO-wide workshop. They sought volunteers in Cook's Extended Leadership Team to serve as leadership "sponsors."

Within the Communication lever, for example, a Culture Advisory Board formed; within Reward & Recognition was the Culture Awards team and the Non-Compensation Rewards & Recognition team; within the Training lever were New Hires, Development Center Program, and Rotations; within Performance Management was Development Planning Skills; and within the Recruiting lever was a Recruiting team. Initially, there were nine teams altogether and each team had varying numbers of people, usually around 15.

These cross-franchise initiative teams allowed people to create relationships across the business unit that they otherwise would not have. Cook said: "The cocktail hours don't do it. Mixers don't do it. People tend to connect with the people they already know and it doesn't create a new network. But if you give people something specific to do that they care about, they form relationships."

It was also important to Cook to allow people to choose what to work on so they cared about it, as well as to allow them to have visibility by presenting to senior leadership like herself and her senior team—to have opportunities they would not have had otherwise.

When Cook launched the first sign-ups for the initiative teams, she had that feeling "like when you're throwing a party and afraid no one is going to show up." She said: "Part of me was scared that no one would sign up, and then part of me thought, 'what if everybody signs up and we don't have enough capacity?' How do we organize them?"

Cook's fears were allayed when over 125 people signed up to be on the first initiative teams, a robust but manageable number. Team kick-off meetings took place around June 2011. And when the Extended Leadership Team met for other purposes, all of the sponsors of the nine initiative teams would give updates on what was happening in each area.

The teams were very successful because people were passionate about the teams and initiatives they had chosen. "The way team members talked about culture and how passionate they were was inspiring," said Cook. And as concrete

deliverables came out of these teams, that helped to change the cynicism related to culture and “people started believing,” said Farooq.

Recruiting Lever

Recruiting Initiative

The Recruiting team focused on defining what “recruiting” actually meant, which led to the question of how to hire people to “fit the culture” with the goal of ensuring a more consistent focus on GIO’s desired culture through screening and hiring.

The team developed questions that hiring managers could ask interviewees that emphasized the four cultural pillars. Derrick Webster, an HR consultant at GIO said: “We created a list of behavioral questions that we thought would screen for our cultural attributes. We came up with a long list and distilled it down to nine questions and when I work with hiring managers, I provide these questions to them as we prepare for our interview strategy.”

For example, a screening question that focused on patient orientation was: “Think of a time in which your detailed understanding of patient needs helped improve service to them and how did you develop such an understanding and how did you apply it?” A Focus on People question was: “Describe a time when you developed a direct report. What approach did you take? What support did you provide and what was the outcome?” A question that screened for the courage and innovation attribute was: “Describe a time when you accomplished a goal because you maintained persistence in the face of highly complex and/or adverse circumstances.” And a question that screened for integrity was: “Describe a time when you raised a difficult issue with your team or management. Why did you feel the way you did? How did you do it and what was the outcome?”

On the questions, Webster said: “There can be a thousand different variations of the right answer to these questions, but we’re looking for a candidate’s thought process, whether they can clearly explain their thought process, what they were considering as they went through analyzing their situation, and a result. If you can do all of that, be concise in your answer, and provide evidence that you use courage and innovation as you manage that situation, then we know you’ve been effective in that competency and that you have a good chance of being able to mesh well with GIO’s culture.”

Training Lever

New Hires Initiative

The New Hires team focused on how GIO onboarded new employees so that the process would align with GIO’s future desired culture. The team created a new hire packet so that new hires received a letter from Jennifer Cook, a welcome letter to GIO, and could view a video about GIO’s culture and why it matters. “Now, when a new employee joins, we talk about culture and what the organization stands for,” said Farooq. “We never used to do things like that before.”

They also launched a new hires reception at the annual GIO meeting where new hires could meet and mingle with key leadership such as Cook and

other leaders. This team also established a mentoring program where new hires were paired with GIO veterans.

Initially, Cristin Hubbard led the Recruiting initiative team and Mike Campbell led the New Hires team. But during the first year, their efforts began to overlap and thus they combined the two teams in early 2012 and Hubbard led the new initiative that was called Team Renew.

The Renew team created a GIO Discovery Guide, a tri-fold pamphlet that started off with, "Science is Personal," opening up to the GIO vision statement and cultural pillars, stating how GIO's culture is fundamental to how it operates. The pamphlet also included information about the four GIO products, patient quotations, information about Genentech's history, and how GIO fit into the broader organization. This initial version included key GIO initiatives.

Many of the initiative teams like the Renew team were very fluid, according to Donna Vaughn, a division manager in Rheumatology and Renew team member: "By the end of or middle of the third quarter of 2013, team Renew will be finished because there won't be anything else for us to do as a team. We will have met all the objectives we established."

Development Center Program Initiative

Another initiative team within the Training lever was the Development Center Program initiative that focused on people development by creating GIO Development Centers—short and intense day-and-a-half workshops where people could learn about different jobs.

The idea was to expose people to a role before they had to commit by applying or interviewing, letting them investigate in a safe environment whether it might be a good fit for them. Content in such workshops covered success factors of these new roles, what hiring managers were looking for, as well as the opportunity to do a mock interview.

Workshops included learning about division managers, getting into a marketing role from a sales role, workshops for the training and development organization (product or people development), and another for the field reimbursement organization (managed care). Eventually, the training sessions, their content, and agendas were handed over to the Commercial Training and Development (CT&D) organization to run the sessions on a more regular basis for the full Commercial population.

Job Swap Initiative

This team's mission was to evaluate and potentially establish a job swap program. However, when the team conducted a large feasibility analysis, they determined that to implement a rotational job swap across GIO would be too challenging in terms of legal, organizational, and logistical issues. This is an important example where a "no-go" can be as important as an implemented program. The team gave full diligence to a good idea, but also pragmatically concluded it wouldn't be feasible.

Communication Lever

Culture Advisory Board Initiative

The Culture Advisory Board team focused on creating culture awareness and providing a sounding board for cultural progress and issues. “We were tasked with how to build awareness,” said Block, who worked on the team. “And how do we get people to understand what the GIO culture and the pillars are?” The team focused on skepticism and cynicism related to culture efforts and how to communicate on “all things culture.”

Also a part of the Culture Advisory Board’s mission was to make sure that people coming into GIO after the early culture effort would have an understanding of the culture through stories and brand. The team met various times per year to come up with strategies to spread the cultural pillars throughout GIO.

They also developed a new logo through a very open process, ultimately allowing the whole GIO organization to vote on a few logo options to represent their culture. The organization selected the multi-colored compass logo. “Jennifer let our team figure out all of the pieces related to the logo,” said Datt. “She provided her perspective and her opinions, but empowered the team to figure it out and to decide what we wanted our logo to look like. This could have easily been a Leadership Team decision where Jennifer and the franchise heads decided, but it wasn’t.”

They also focused on communication related to the pillars. For the pillar Patient Orientation, they worked on switching from talking about selling “vials” to how many patients’ lives were impacted. Datt said: “The number of vials we sell is our business. We talk about dollars and cents, we sell products, and we are held to revenue targets. But when we communicate, how do we talk about what we are doing for patients as opposed to how we are impacting revenue? We don’t have to talk about vials or revenues, but we can focus on what we have done for patients, how we are trying to make sure that our products are getting to patients, and what the challenges are of getting products to patients. And when we talk about how we have been successful, we can talk about how many patients lives we have impacted.”

Thus, when the organization had sales reviews and presentations to the sales organization, people shifted focus from “how are your numbers?” to “what have you done for patients?” “This was a big dynamic shift,” said Datt. “Everything started to tie to our mission and business objectives. We focus on chronic diseases and it’s very hard to get our products to patients because there are all these roadblocks and barriers, but as we focus on patients and why it was difficult, we realized that there was something about our patient type that was unique to all of GIO, and there were certain things that were happening in the market that we could impact.”

After a few years and survey results showing positive results, the team decided to dissolve itself. Datt said: “We realized that at some point, the culture was now a part of our everyday vernacular. Our Culture Advisory team was struggling to find more to do, because this is now part of what everybody does.”

GIO/Brand Portals & Portal-2-Go Initiative

The Portals initiative team focused on fostering cross-brand communication, culture, tools, and programs utilizing the GIO Portal (a central place online for all things GIO), Brand Portals, and emerging technologies. The team wanted to make the portal a one-stop-shop where “anyone from this fragmented organization can feel a part of a common community,” according to Jewett. “Prior to this, the portal just had facts, but the new portal drew people in.”

Information and efforts by the various initiative teams were placed on the portal. For example, a New Hires and Recruiting button led to a PDF of interview questions that the Recruiting team had come up with. The Discovery Guide developed by the same team was also on the portal. The portal also had a feedback button where users could send ideas of what could be done better, related to the culture efforts. And in the spirit of transparency, even the 500 ideas that the GIO employees came up with at the National Sales Meeting were posted on the portal.

They also worked on Portal-2-Go, an app that allowed users to access the portal via a mobile device. The team created an app that took the portal and put it on the mobile phones via a reader application so that every time something was updated on the portal, it would appear on the Portal-2-Go while they were waiting at the physician’s office, for example. “A person in Alabama is suddenly getting an update on their peer in North Dakota who was recognized for doing something with patient focus,” said Jewett. “All of a sudden, everything comes alive in real time.”

Reward & Recognition Lever

Non-Compensation Rewards & Recognition Initiative

This team focused on recognizing people for excellent work outside of the formal awards process. They put together a “Culture in Action” award (CIA) where anyone could go on the GIO Portal and nominate someone who did a great job exemplifying the pillars. Once a person was nominated, an e-mail along with a certificate was sent to the nominee, that person’s manager, and the award was posted on the GIO Portal for everyone to see. Jewett said: “These things are more meaningful to people than money. And the award is very visible too.”

Datt added: “We do a good job of rewards and recognition in terms of benefits and compensation and one-off rewards, but this initiative is about recognition and acknowledging what someone did and the impact that it might have had around one of our four cultural pillars. The more we tell these stories, the more people can see culture in action that inspires them on what can be done differently and how to think about their business and organizational challenges differently.”

During GIO’s annual awards night, the team added non-monetary awards to the ceremony in order to celebrate exceptional behavior as it related to the cultural pillars. Moreover, at an annual meeting one year, the team wallpapered a large hallway with Culture in Action awards and associated write-ups. “I get chills thinking about it,” said Hubbard. “When you walked down the hallway, you could see the names of all the different people in GIO that had demonstrated our culture and a little write-up about what they had done. And it also gave the name of the person who took the time to write it up so it highlighted two people.”

Culture Awards Initiative

The Culture Awards team designed integrated annual awards that recognize GIO culture in action. Beyond the typical marketing excellence and sales excellence awards, the team developed an award for patient focus, called the “Founder’s Award” given to a GIO team member who had shown a tremendous amount of patient focus in their job.

Hubbard said: “We’re always talking about sales and marketing and meeting numbers, but at the end of the day, who’s that person in the organization across GIO who has shown the most patient focus throughout the year? This was such a great idea and it’s been a huge success.” Jewett also said: “The Founder’s Award is a great example of how reward and recognition is really about the patient. What we found in GIO that is most lacking is that we are living this every day, but we don’t tell these stories, communicate, or recognize these things in a loud enough way.”

Performance Management Lever

Development Planning Skills Initiative

The Development Planning Skills team focused on developing tools and resources to help GIO employees create and track actionable professional Development Plans, focusing on what inspired them to accelerate their personal growth. The team’s key objectives were to remove the mystery and complexity around developing and tracking an actionable Development Plan and to ensure that development planning wasn’t a “once a year, form-completing exercise.”

This team assessed awareness of learning and development tools and manager involvement in development planning. They also launched a learning and development tools and best practices “hub” on the GIO Portal that housed learning and development tools. Jewett said: “The team conducted a survey to determine what people desired in their conversation with their managers and what are the development opportunities that are most meaningful?” This information was also posted on the GIO Portal. “These efforts were all in support of having a stronger development conversation with your manager and communicating how much of it you actually control,” added Jewett.

In 2012, this team changed its name to Development Planning and Conversation. They conducted two-on-one coaching at the GIO Business Unit meeting (cross-brand). People brought in their development plans and spoke with leaders outside of their own brands. “This allowed people to build connections with leaders outside of their own brands to show commonalities and to build bridges. People walked away from that thinking, ‘This is what I’ve been looking for,’” said Jewett.

Walking the Talk

An important aspect of Cook’s success and the success of GIO’s culture efforts was the fact that she “walked the talk,” according to Farooq. “One of the big reasons for the success of this culture effort was because Jennifer demonstrated

and lived it in her day-to-day practice. It wasn't something that you saw on the odd occasion, but it was something you saw daily in terms of how she did things."

Cook also made sure culture initiative teams and their efforts were embedded into everything that GIO did. She gave the initiatives attention on stage, when everyone was together. She had a poster session at one of the business unit meetings where every initiative team had a poster during a cocktail hour to show colleagues what they were doing. "Many of these people also presented on stage at meetings and were highly visible," said Farooq.

Another example was at a larger meeting in Los Angeles, where the team wrapped large columns with fitted skins that stated the four pillars. During other large meetings, banners were always on stage to show the four pillars. At a January business unit meeting, during the patient session, four patients each told their stories and connected them to one of the pillars. "The patients did a phenomenal job tying things like courage and what it meant to them in their journey with their disease," said Cook. "They stood in front of these huge banners with the pillar they were talking about, and it really drove home the connection of these concepts, showing that these were not just words."

Cook consciously tried to live the "focus on people" pillar by being accessible. "I act on that all the time and always say 'yes' if people just want advice or time from me," said Cook. She held culture team office hours where any of the teams could just show up and get advice and support or get a milestone approved. The office hours began in the fall of 2011 and members of Cook's Leadership Team were also available for their own office hours.

Beyond office hours, every month or so, the initiative teams could dial into a call and speak directly with Cook and the Leadership Team to give updates on what they had been working on. "This showed everyone that what they were working on was a priority for the organization," said Farooq.

Authenticity was important to Cook too: "I try to be an accessible, helpful person both because I think it's a good idea and because that is who I am. I want to stay authentic. That is one of my favorite words. You can't model yourself after someone else because the inauthenticity comes through."

Cook's "you choose" mentality described above resonated with a lot of people: "Jennifer never told people what they should do, but rather she allowed us to go to her," said Datt. "She would ask questions and provided insight and support through open office hours. She didn't tell us what to do or what not to do, but she asked us what we were trying to achieve, how we thought we could make it happen, and provided other alternatives. The ideas came from the organization and Jennifer and the Leadership Team viewed themselves as removing roadblocks."

Cook also changed how she ran her leadership meetings. The new meetings incorporated more feedback and listening time on Cook's part and incorporated the pillars. Farooq said: "I saw how Jennifer's leading by example on culture changed the environment that I was working in. She would always turn around in meetings and say, 'Well, hold on for a second, what's the right thing to do here, how do we make things easier for people, how do we change things, and so on. She very much

lived what she practiced and actually demonstrated elements of the culture that she had talked about in her day-to-day situation.”

Moreover, Cook tied her own personal performance goals to her culture efforts. “I have a lot of product and business goals each year, but I chose to include these culture efforts as a specific business unit strategy goal in my first year,” said Cook. “I told my team that I was being assessed on how this goes so that they knew it was real.”

The Future

As Cook reflected on GIO’s culture change efforts, as well as looked toward the future, she wondered what she and her team should focus on next? After a whirlwind few years, she knew her team was still energized, but also potentially weary. She wondered how she could make sure GIO’s culture remained intact and institutionalized well beyond her and her team’s tenure.

Notes

1. The GIO Leadership Team included Cook, sales and marketing franchise heads, the operations and communications lead/chief of staff, and the HR lead.
2. Professor Jennifer Chatman is a professor of management at the University of California at Berkeley’s Haas School of Business, along with Professor Charles O’Reilly at Stanford’s Graduate School of Business, and Professor David Caldwell at Santa Clara University.
3. Created by Professors David Caldwell, Jennifer Chatman, and Charles O’Reilly.
4. In Professor Jennifer Chatman’s research, pillars are the “dimensions.”
5. The GIO Extended Leadership Team included all the members of the Leadership Team, plus the marketing directors of each franchise, national sales directors of each franchise, and franchise operations leads.
6. “Driving Culture Change to Enable GIO to Achieve its Business Goals,” GIO internal presentation and prep. Document for 1/25/11 National Sales Meeting.

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