

THE CLIENT: TBAYTEL

TBAYTel provides high quality, reliable and affordable local telephone service, continuous cellular coverage across Northwestern Ontario and fast, affordable and reliable High Speed Internet telephone and Internet service.

THE FOCUS SOLUTION

As the new leader of a municipally-owned telecommunications company in 2002, General Manager Phill Comrie was faced with a mixed bag of issues. He soon recognized that fundamental changes were in order.

"This was a telecom business that was being run like a city department. There was no real sense of urgency when it came to facing a changing industry. With an evolving regulatory structure and developments in telecom technology, the barriers to competition were falling. TBayTel, since its inception, had been a 'benevolent monopoly'. That was all changing, and yet no-one seemed to have worked through how the business would have to change to remain vital."

– Phill Comrie, General Manager, TBayTel

The problem stemmed in part from the organization's governance structure.

"There was no Board of Directors, whose function it would be to represent the interests of shareholders. The city Council played its usual oversight role, but TBayTel was always one small piece of a broad city agenda."

– Phill Comrie

So, what did he do?

"I started by trying to create a vision and a business plan for implementing it. But I got caught in the trap of trying to serve two roles – both facilitating the discussion and contributing my own thoughts, ideas and leadership. It turned out to be a bigger and more challenging job than I had anticipated. That's when I went outside the organization for help, and engaged FOCUS."

– Phill Comrie

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Since that time, Phill and his management team have accomplished a lot.

"We started by creating a vision that was both clear and compelling. This vision defined what a truly successful telecom company will look like in the future. Then, we took an objective and critical look at ourselves and identified the gaps that existed between where we were, and where we wanted to be. Those gaps have become the critical focus of our ongoing planning.

For the first time, we have a three-year strategic plan that keeps us all clear on the direction we are headed. Each year we set our overall priorities in a corporate annual plan, and each functional area creates a departmental plan that falls down from that. We are all aligned and flying in formation."

– Phill Comrie

Phill points to some tangible changes that have come about through this process.

"For our shareholders, who are concerned about the value of their investment, we have been able to identify \$4-5 million dollars in incremental revenue. We also have implemented expense controls that will put at least \$500,000 to the bottom line. Profitability is up 10%.

As an organization, we are doing a better job of listening to our customers. Through surveys and direct contact, we are learning what is important to them about our services, and how they feel about us as a supplier.

TBayTel employees, across the board, are developing a service mindset. Everyone has a better understanding of what we are doing, and why. This translates into greater efficiency, better quality, and a higher level of satisfaction."

– Phill Comrie

And for Phill as the leader?

"I am much more structured and organized now; and everything links together. Even though we are maybe two or three years from total alignment, I have a framework that I know will get us there. That gives me piece of mind.

Not long ago, I invited all TBayTel employees to join me on a journey to becoming the best telecom company in North America.

That is a journey I look forward to, and one that I am confident we will make, together."

– Phill Comrie

For more information on how FOCUS Management can help your organization achieve a clear direction, a winning strategy and a results-driven culture that will keep you far ahead of the competition, contact:

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