

Interview with Steven Najdal, Continuous Improvement Leader (Roche- Bâle).

Steven Najdal has abundantly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance all along the project.

What was the topic of and rationale for, this project ?



The project was oriented around 'Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Innovation in a Global Pharmaceuticals Company', very deliberately a broad scope to give the students sufficient latitude to direct their work autonomously. This topic is of continuous and strategic importance to Roche as "Innovation is our core" and the project offered Roche an opportunity to get five "fresh pairs of eyes" looking at our organisation and how we relate to the broader industry context. We know that an innovation culture needs nurturing and are always open/keen to understand proven/emerging external best practices that can help facilitate this.

What do you think about this way of working (learning) ?

We felt that it would be important to give the students an opportunity to gain some "real world", i.e. in-company experience. Such a project provides insights on the challenges and opportunities in drug development, and enable the students to engage with managers and staff at all levels and from the many disciplines represented in our organization. We tried to make the project itself something of a simulation – distributed team-working, stretching deliverables, tight timelines and finite resources. Again, it is about trying to make the entire experience a learning opportunity.



How have you provided continuous learning support to the students?



In addition to the Project Coordinator who helped the students to organize their research effort, we provided a senior leadership mentor from within our Development Leadership Team - offering his counsel as required by the students and held an interim review at which the students presented their initial findings. With the exception of a one-day visit to Dijon and the students' "kick-Off" visit to Basel (which included our new PD Induction programme for all new starters), we have maintained on-going contact mainly via TC, VC and email - much as we would in any internal Roche project.

What do you think about the final report ?

The report is a useful synthesis of the external and internal research; interviews, literature review and survey, undertaken by the students. Alain, Lisa, Mélanie, Martin and Romain have had the remarkable opportunity to study how fundamental changes in our industry relate to Roche and our continued ability to innovate. The outcome of their rigorous examination is a Ten Point Action Plan for Roche.

How Roche will follow up the project ?

Some elements of the students' recommendations already form part of our innovation strategy for Development, others could be incorporated where they can be translated into practical, implementable initiatives and processes. Some relate to our recent acquisition of Genentech - which validates that we have made a wise decision!

