

In the increasingly competitive business environment Thales Security and Consulting recognises that innovation is central to adding value to our products and solutions. We differentiate ourselves by offering unique capabilities, or functionality and performance beyond those of our competitors. At the same time we are focused on delivering value for money to our customers through the application of rigorous programme management discipline. There is a danger that, unless actively cultivated, innovation could become submerged in the completely legitimate focus on customer delivery. We recognised an opportunity to do more to promote a culture of innovation in our business. We needed someone independent who nonetheless understood our business to help us develop a simple, light process that encouraged innovation.

Dr. Vincent Considine of Vee Solutions Ltd was asked to support Thales Security and Consulting by helping us to plan and deliver a series of workshops designed to help us harness the innovative nature of our engineers. The objective of the exercise was to "put the fun" back into engineering and to capture and exploit our engineers' good ideas.

Vincent had worked with Thales several times in the past and knew our business well enough to focus on what needed to be done while not being distracted by irrelevancies. Vincent worked with us over several half day planning sessions to define the workshop objectives and to plan the structure of the workshops. Together we delivered several workshops that engaged a wide cross section of staff from different functions and at all levels of seniority around the business. The workshops enabled our staff to come up with lots of ideas for improvement. We were able to capture and implement many of the ideas, indeed the enthusiasm generated by the workshops was so infectious that people spontaneously went away and implemented some of the suggestions. We now have several new 'incubator' projects underway as a direct consequence of this initiative.

Vincent's previous assignments with Thales enabled him to integrate with us very quickly. His easy-going yet challenging style of workshop facilitation got the best from our people and we delivered a great result for the business. Vincent's previous experience as Director of Research proved invaluable since he had a profound understanding of research and development in technology businesses. This was particularly beneficial in helping us to plan and manage the workshops themselves and subsequent phases of cultural change with just the right balance between task-orientation and innovation.

Working with Vincent has been stimulating, enjoyable and productive and his contribution to the development of our culture of innovation is of great value for our futures.

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