



Able Engineering & Component Services

Exceptional results with Welch Way

Able Engineering & Component Services provides component overhaul service to some of the world's largest and most successful fixed wing operators. Able's mission is to safely reduce aircraft operating costs by providing resourceful component repair, overhaul and approved replacement parts solutions.

Able employees pride themselves in the pursuit of alternative maintenance solutions and commitment to customer partnerships earning them a reputation as unique problem solvers providing the best possible customer experience. A spirit of continuous improvement keeps Able at the leading edge of the aviation industry.

Chief Executive Officer Lee Benson is no stranger to the Jack Welch management style because of his status as a student of Jack's executive programs since 2007. Lessons learned during that time helped fuel the inspiration to not only bring the Welch Way leadership development program to Able but to also develop a proprietary evaluation system to maximize the effectiveness of the Welch Way; the latter of which encourages a mantra of finding a better way every day.

"It was clear that in order to profitably grow the business beyond where we were at, we needed to better align all of our employees to strategy and culture," said Benson.

At Able, there are six levels of leaders: the CEO, two presidents of different companies; three different businesses in the entire group; senior leaders; middle managers and front line supervisors. All told, between 60 and 70 of these leaders attended the Welch Way programs.

"After 20 of our senior leaders attended the Welch Way programs, the conversation changed so significantly in a really positive way around execution, leadership and strategy; it got the attention of other leaders in the organization," said Benson. "And they wanted to take the programs as well. So of course, we did that. And the conversation now is entirely company-wide throughout all levels of leadership, and even surprisingly at the front line supervisor level."

According to Benson, the Welch Way program principles are timeless and produce measurable results. And, while the views of the program are from Jack Welch, these views reinforce the insights from many other respected leaders in business, which gives them validation and the highest level of credibility.

Every six months, each leader progresses through the list of five core leadership traits and gives at least two examples of how they've exemplified those traits in their job to make the company measurably better. Leaders simply can't verbally express that they



Challenge

- Employees were not aligned to strategy or culture which suppressed business growth

Solution

- Able rolled out Welch Way to the entire leadership team and three business units, and institutionalized accountability for applying the principles and reporting affected business outcomes

Results

- Sustained 20%+ compound annual growth rate (CAGR)
- Uncovered nearly 200,000 hours of capacity in one year, leading to 100 people that Able didn't have to hire to handle growth
- Employees have helped to position business to grow Able in size five times
- 100% of employees are connected to strategy
- 100% of employees are being developed to bring more value for every dollar of payroll invested

follow these traits; they need to regularly demonstrate the traits with their actions. Leaders must document something that uncovers capacity, saves money or directly or indirectly generates additional business.

Able developed an online business management operating system called Execute to Win (ETW) for institutionalizing Welch Way ideology and methodologies into every corner of the organization. Employees at all levels access this interactive and collaborative platform once a week and document something that they did to make Able measurably better than it was the day before. As a result, in one year alone just in operations in one of the businesses, Able uncovered about 200,000 hours of capacity. These time savings ideas, collected from employee submissions led to 100 people that Able didn't have to hire to handle the growth. Able then shared 16% of the pre-tax net profit back with all the non-supervisory employees for achieving those results.

Able follows the four "Es and a P" from Welch Way; energy, energize, edge, execute and passion. But they also added "R."

Benson reflected, "One of the leaders had a really bad week and, was telling employees that he was thinking about quitting. I sat down [with him] and I said, 'I think you're a lot

Without practicing in accordance with the Welch Way, we probably wouldn't be half what we are today. For the last five years on average, we've enjoyed around 20% to 25% compounded annual growth. The results otherwise would have been significantly lower.

Lee Benson
CEO, Able Engineering & Component Services

more resilient than this.' And he sat up in his chair and he said, 'You know what? I AM more resilient than this.' And so we added R for resiliency."

As a result of participation in the Welch Way programs, the entire leadership team and all three businesses are now fully aligned. All employees are connected to strategy and culture (e.g., the mission, the behaviors and leadership traits). All employees know exactly what's expected and exactly where they stand 100% of the time with no surprises. In fact, employees know their performance appraisal scores long before walking in the room with their managers because of the ongoing transparency infused in the company. Instead, employees and their managers are talking about where they're going into the future and how they're going to raise the bar and accomplish even better results.

"In my view, Jack Welch is like Miracle-Gro® for leaders. He's had a huge impact on my life and all the leaders in the organization, actually all three businesses that I run," said Benson. "Over the last number of years since I've known Jack, I've talked to so many other leaders that feel exactly the same. I can't thank Jack enough for the impact he's had on my life and the leadership qualities and improvements in everybody that I work with in my company."



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