

## SHORT DECISION MAKING AT SCHIEDEL CHIMNEY SYSTEMS

### BEST PRACTICE

Barbara Windisch, MBA

*The project originated with a request for a team building workshop, but was soon given the title: Short decision processes in management.*

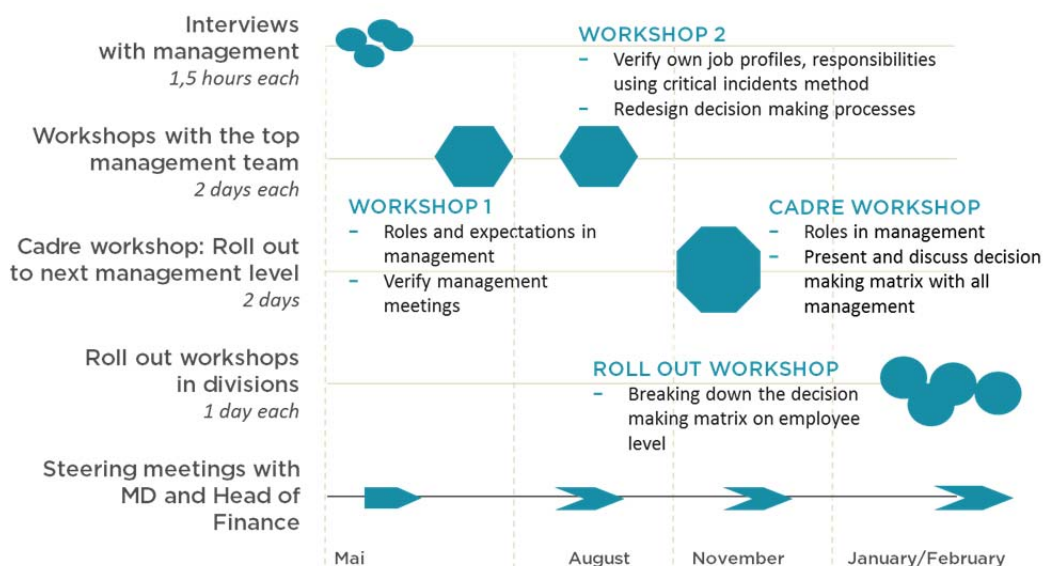


Figure: Aligning Management Roles and Responsibilities  
Change Architecture „Short Decision Processes“ at Schiedel Chimney Systems

After the briefing by the management director and interviews with top management it became obvious that the management team at Schiedel wanted to test how »well attuned« to each other they really were, and to critically reevaluate old habits. In the first workshop management defined their »role maps« and shared expectations of each other’s function and person. Managing meetings was discussed and it was decided meeting sessions should either be cut down to a minimum or that some meetings might not be needed at all. At this

stage the need to rethink decision procedures became obvious, as most decisions were arrived at in group meetings.

Thus, the second workshop verified competences and responsibilities of the business divisions. Special attention was given to »gray areas« between divisional responsibilities. A decision matrix now defines decision making processes at Schiedel: who is responsible, who needs to be consulted or informed, which limits are involved, when does the managing director take the final decision. This process was rolled out through the next management level in the »Cadre Workshop« and finally trickled down to all Schiedel employees.

At Schiedel, the management did not »reinvent the wheel« but focused on reviewing and testing existing decision making processes against efficiency and effectiveness. The outcome for Schiedel: quick and clear decisions. Results are communicated to each level accordingly. »Short decision making at Schiedel« was a small step with a big effect – simply through applying Ockham’s razor.

Schiedel Austria has 90 employees and is market leader for chimney systems in Austria. The corporation is part of Schiedel AG (located in Vienna) which operates in 26 countries in Europe and USA with 1500 employees. Further information can be found at [www.schiedel.com](http://www.schiedel.com)

#### **BARBARA WINDISCH, MBA**

Since 1998 Barbara has run her own consulting practice specializing in organizational development and change management. She facilitates workshops implementing strategies, structural changes and strategic human resource development projects. She acts as a sparring partner to top executives, HR and organizational development managers and helps them to align management teams to new systems, roles and responsibilities. In 2004 Barbara added management and leadership education to her portfolio designing and training international executive development programs.

Barbara started her career as management consultant with Ernst&Young specializing in IT strategies and analysis. She held management positions in Austria, New Jersey and Germany running organizational and HR development departments and managing large scale change projects. She holds an MBA from The University of Chicago, Booth School of Business, a degree in business administration and IT from the University of Vienna and attended a systemic consulting program.

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