

Ben and jerry's ice cream

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream was founded by two childhood friends who had no business experience. From the onset, the business focused on making the best ice cream and giving back to its community whilst having fun. In addition to increasing revenue, the business also expanded its franchises and attracted staff that aligned to its mission which was a fun and happy go lucky environment. Both Ben and Jerry are known to have stated their desire to have an organization that is both a fun place to work and to feels like a family. Not with standing to say, a family dynamic does not effectively work in business if there is not someone overall in charge (Helena, et al, 2015).

However, because the culture of the organization included having a fun and laid back attitude, they were faced with severe consequences including how to be successful in the business world. According to Cummings & Worley (2008), " it became evident to Ben and Jerry as well as to management and employees that the company's external image - of funk, fun, and love - was not in sync with the internal atmosphere of the company" (p. 306). As a result, Ben and Jerry presented several issues for the organization development (OD) practitioner to evaluate. The OD consultant decided to use teambuilding intervention in this case. Although this was a good idea, there were other underlying issues in the company that team building would not have addressed.

Identification of the Key Issues

Several issues can be identified in this case. They include conflict between management and the board, " unclear lines of authority and responsibility," a " lack of operational control," and no clear organizational structure or development plan in place. We see that there was a constant conflict

between managers and the founders. They all had different visions for the company. The founders were laid back and had a fun free attitude whereas the managers looked at the organization from a business perspective. In order for the business to be successful both founders and management had to be on the same page.

Another issue the company faced was the fact that there were no clear lines of authority, responsibility or operational control. No one at the company was willing to take the lead on completing tasks or providing guidance when it came to the direction of the company or decision making. Both Ben and Jerry as founders preferred to hand down responsibility to the management team. The third issue presented in this case is that the board or management had no concept about organization development. The lack of an overall organizational structure and any organizational development knowledge or practices warranted a unique intervention for the leadership team.

Last but not the least was the issue of communication and coordination within the company. The OD consultant was right in recommending team building activities as it allows for individuals to learn how to communicate with one another. However, in this particular case, team building exercises was not the only intervention that would have worked in the case of Ben and Jerry's.

Alternative Courses of Action That Could Be Taken

One alternative course of action that could be taken in this case includes having a third party intervention. Due to the personality difference between Ben and Jerry, it would be helpful for a neutral party to evaluate how they

can address their differences but at the same time work together to stay on the same page with regards to the business. An additional course of action could be the use of a Large-Group Intervention technique. This method involves active involvement of all of the stakeholders throughout the organization. Large Group intervention have been successful in managing change in organization development, organization redesign, restructuring, strategic planning, visioning, values and principles clarification, process improvement, customer/supplier relations, global learning and development, and formation of collaborative alliances (Griffin & Purser, 2007).

Lastly, would be the technique the OD consultant used - Team Building. Team building generally refers to a series of planned activities that help groups improve the way they accomplish tasks. It is also designed to help group members enhance their interpersonal and problem-solving skills while increasing overall team performance (Kennedy & Nilson, 2008).

Evaluation of Alternate Courses of Action

Third party intervention focuses on conflicts that are existing between two or more people in an organization. It has a similar approach to conflict resolution. It is best used for smaller groups as it addresses differences between individuals. In this case study, since the board members were in constant disagreement, having a third party intervene would work to the advantage of the board members, especially Ben, one of the founding members and Chico, the General Manager. When it came to run the business, they both had different visions.

Ben focused on maintaining the fun side of the business by focusing on non-traditional approaches including funkier advertising campaigns while Chico had the more traditional approach to the business. He was more focused on the day to day success of the business by looking at expenses and solving problems as they arose. Although they were both problem solvers within the organization, lower level employees struggled to see who was generating the solution (Cummings & Worley, 2009). This shows that there was a lack of communication among the leadership that was trickling down to the lower level management.

A successful third-party intervention approach could help members of the leadership board to examine their differences and help them analyze and share their attitudes and behavior towards the business. The end result could be having a clear and honest communication method. This could also help resolve the conflict and create equality between the disagreeing parties whilst increasing productivity. However, it is important to note that not all conflicts at all points in time will be amenable to a single and unified method of intervention. The defining characteristics of the conflict, particularly the stage of escalation, need to be considered in the light of the question as to which type of third party might intervene in the conflict most effectively and in which manner (Keashly, L., & Fisher, R. , 1990).

In addition, a third-party intervention in this case could be someone hired separately like a Coach in addition to the OD consultant. Executive coaching is defined as a one-on-one relationship between a professional coach and an executive (coaches). The purpose of executive coaching is to enhance the

coachee's behavioral change through self-awareness and learning, and ultimately contribute to individual and organizational success. (Boozer and Saros, 2012). One of the more challenging aspects of leadership is managing two individuals who are in conflict. Both may be valuable to your company, both are likely to have plausible reasons for why the other person is wrong and dysfunctional, but the fact remains that their value to your organization diminishes as a result of the continuing acrimony (Glaser & Associates).

The Large-Group Intervention technique could also work in this case. With this method, all active stakeholders in the organization are involved with organizing and decision making. In the past, large group intervention has been successful in managing change in organization development, organization redesign, restructuring, strategic planning, visioning, values and principles clarification, process improvement, customer/supplier relations, global learning and development, and formation of collaborative alliances (Griffin & Purser, 2007). Since the strategy of the business is developed and communicated in an ongoing way, there is transparency and collaboration throughout the process. As a result, large group intervention enhances communication among the organization as a whole (Bunker & Alban, 2014).

This method can be successful because everyone is involved in the change process throughout the organization. In this case, the founders of Ben and Jerry's and the management team would have the opportunity to make the case for having a fun environment and maintain the family-oriented company that they wanted whilst addressing the business needs as well since everyone's input is involved.

Recommendation of the best Course of Action

According to Tearle, R. (2011), in organizational development, " The starting point is to be clear about your objectives. Then choose the appropriate OD intervention based on what you want to achieve. Since there are several objectives emerging from this case, there are several recommendations to be made for the business to be successful.

First and foremost, the board should all be on the same page when it comes to decision making. In addition to the OD practitioner, a third-party intervention should be brought in to address the ongoing conflict amongst the board members. In the case study, reference is made to some of the board's responsibilities that were supposed to be shared with the managers that did not happen. Once the conflict has been resolved, the board should make it a priority to agree when it comes to organizational changes and communicating it effectively to the rest of the company. Employees should be made aware of any new change that is happening in the organization. Coaching should also be implemented for both employees and management to aid with increasing productivity and performance, assisting with getting rid of complications, and defining goals.

In addition, development and training processes should be established to help employees accomplish their goals as well as the goals of the company. Quarterly performance evaluations would provide employees with knowledge as to whether they are doing well or need improvements at their job functions. Management should also have the performance evaluations to ensure that they are also meeting organizational goals.

Lastly, the final recommendation would be for the whole of Ben & Jerry's to go through a large group intervention. In the case of Ben and Jerry's this is what is needed for the entire organization - organizational development and design, process improvement and collaborative alliances.