

CASE

# Four months to change

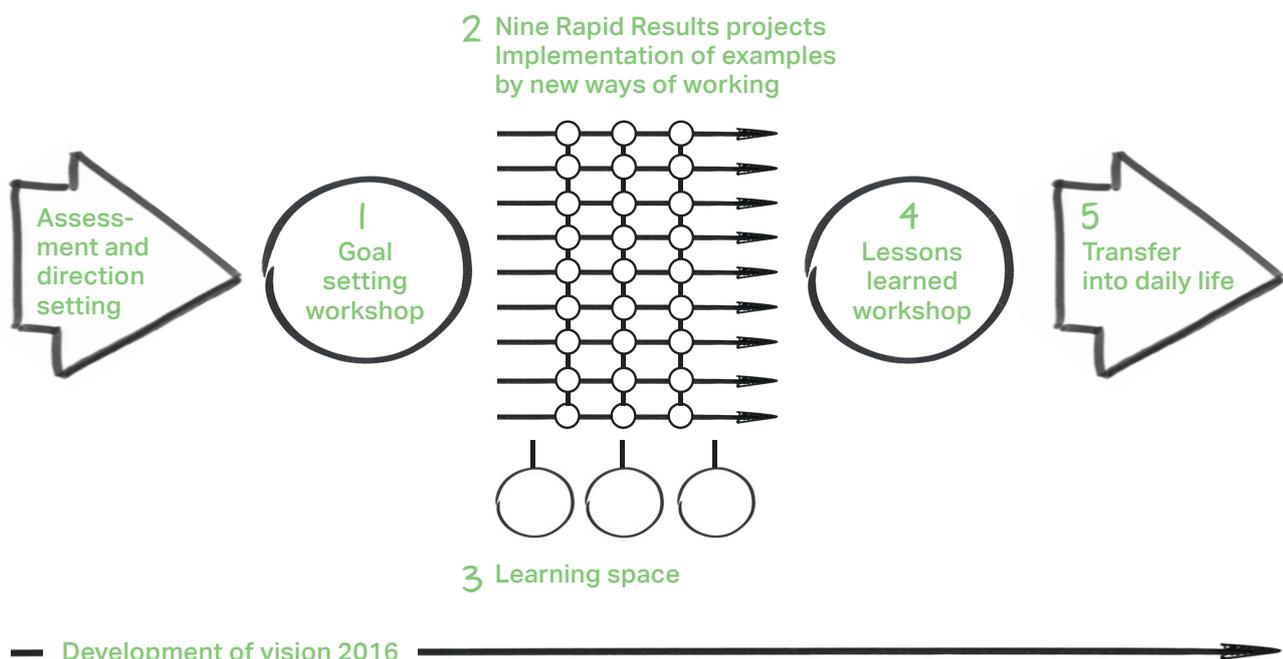
## BMW Engine Testing Unit

Nine teams, four months, one holistic development process: the new head of BMW's Engine Testing Unit was required to increase customer satisfaction, improve processes and develop the culture. But the main challenge was to transform the historically developed unit with 600 employees into an agile, high-performance organization.

by Manfred Höfler and Thomas Mandl

### Rapid Results process setup at BMW

Initiated by one of BMW's internal change consultants, an innovative change process was designed. Based on an dialogue-style short assessment feedback (customer conference, two employee workshops) the management team developed an attractive vision for 2016 and a comprehensive development roadmap. But one issue remained open: How to energize the organization and people towards change? A five step Rapid Results roadmap was set up (see illustration).



## Five change steps at BMW



### 1 Two-day goal-setting workshop

The top management defined the ambition, nine project leaders worked out projects with self-defined, challenging and measurable goals (e. g. reduce setup time by 50 percent, increase capacity utilization by 20 percent).



### 2 Nine Rapid Results projects

Each project leader put his team together and worked on his goals without additional resources. Top management freed the teams from limiting restrictions. Now each team was responsible for their own way of working.



### 3 Learning spaces

Every 4<sup>th</sup> week the nine team leaders met one day to exchange their experience, coach each other and work on how to overcome obstacles. Top management was invited for an hour to support if required. People's »batteries« were reloaded.



### 4 Lessons learned workshop

After four months, the project leaders and line managers (24 people) held a one-day workshop where results were presented and practical experience was exchanged. The group discussed success factors and cultural and organizational obstacles.

### 5 Transfer into daily life

The top management took the outcome and experiences of the Rapid Results initiatives to create changes in structures, processes and systems. A new way of working could be rolled out because people believe that it works.

### Examples for results in piloted areas

#### TANGIBLE

- Reduced setup time by half
- 20 percent capacity gain at engine testing units
- Output increase
- 30 percent lead time reduction
- Increased promised delivery time
- 95 percent availability of test cars

#### INTANGIBLE

- Empowerment of operational people
- Common spirit – increased cooperation between units
- Practical input for new organizational structure
- Increased self confidence of people who want to change things
- Increased collaboration with internal customers

**BMW GROUP**



Rolls-Royce  
Motor Cars Limited



### Facts of BMW Engine Testing Unit

600 employees

Fast growing

Six departments

Project: Start 01/2014 – End 07/2014

# Interview with project leaders

## Why did you choose the Rapid Results approach instead of a traditional change process?

Johannes Guggenmos: Because people of all hierarchies are not patient enough to wait for results. They want to see effects of change more or less immediately. However, major changes need time. The Rapid Results approach is a very smart method of visualizing changes after 100 days as well as maintaining interest on the way to achieving the overall objective.

Joachim Rückert: Processes in the engine R&D test field are very complex and technology-heavy. Therefore a top-down change approach is less effective than a participative change process that considers the technological knowledge of employees.

## What were the pitfalls you had to avoid during the process?

Johannes Guggenmos: The major challenge is to balance the needs for resources between daily business and the change project. Additionally, the Rapid Results approach requires intensive support from the management in order to protect employees from excessive work overload.

Joachim Rückert: A challenge was to focus on the change process with enough resources. It helped that the Rapid Results project also had an immediate impact on daily business. This type of change process needs a strong and continuous commitment as well as the process understanding from the management – this, in turn, needs a lot of persuasion and endurance.

## What were the outcomes that surprised you most?

Johannes Guggenmos: The strong commitment of leaders and their teams. Our intention was to improve internal customer satisfaction. What was especially surprising was the fact that our customers actively bought into the change processes. They were strongly supportive and generated mutual improvement effects.

Joachim Rückert: Once the project leaders defined their own ambitious goals for their working topic, they identified themselves with their project and were high-

ly motivated and committed. It was amazing to see how this spirit took over their whole team. I was surprised how self-organized they ran their projects.

## How was it to trust in people's own energy and experience?

Johannes Guggenmos: Who else can understand the needs for improvements better than the people affected in everyday work? We gave some of them the mandate to improve their situation together with the process partners. And it worked. The given trust released additional energy for organizing the changes. The results are really impressive.

## What did you learn personally?

Johannes Guggenmos: Change processes cannot be driven by single individuals and become difficult if you choose a pure top-down approach. For me it is a new way of motivating people and it was a key experience concerning how a change process can be managed. One additional challenge is to have a highly motivated, professional and confident change agent (project coordinator), who is accepted by both the employees and the management.

Joachim Rückert: The results we achieved would not have been so relevant for daily work without the Rapid Results approach. Because the Rapid Results projects took place alongside daily business, the final results were proven and revised by practitioners. Thus, these results were ready to be implemented successfully. Additionally, the best practice results were relevant and could be implemented for other topics. ●



Johannes Guggenmos  
Head of Engine Testing



Joachim Rückert  
Project coordinator