

“Top management alignment, mutual support and trust, honest communication, patience and openness, and clear time frames are crucial to managing change.”

The story I want to share

A classical hierarchical structure no longer did the job.

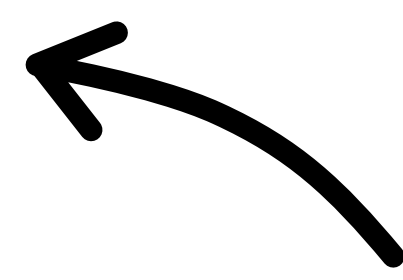
The reasons:

- Management overload; many issues were being handled by our direction instead of the responsible employees.
- Silo-thinking; there was a clear need to improve the collaboration between often disconnected islands of know-how.
- Processes such as decision-making were too slow for the rapidly changing environment.
- Willingness to incorporate employees ideas and offer them opportunities to develop themselves.

For these reasons we are becoming agile.

We started this process with the help of a consultant. In 6 different domains, we have defined specific roles with clear accountability, output and decision-making authority. Decisions are consulted in a circle. Translating the model to our daily work is not always easy as **we still fall back into old habits**. We do not yet have solutions for everything – we are moving slowly.


swisscontact



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Role-based leadership, a strategic initiative.

Lessons learnt

- The most important lesson learnt is **how to manage expectations**. We communicated the overall concept too soon, highlighting the opportunities of the model without sufficiently considering realistic time frames and concrete implementation.
- Employees therefore became frustrated; they didn't understand the implications of this change for their daily work.
- We now have a circle of role coaches in place – employees in each domain – who will help to develop the concept further. **It is crucial to have both management and a driving-force of employees on board.**

How to write a “role description”?

We use a template for the description of a role. **Although tasks might be the same as in the previous job description, an employee can have roles in different domains.** This has already helped significantly to overcome duplications. Furthermore, reflecting on the accountability, output and decision-making power of each role was very helpful in clarifying previously unclear responsibilities.