



Building Intercultural Teams

Industry: Automotive

Situation:

International production and transformation projects required close collaboration between teams from Asia, Europe, and South America. In one global OEM programme, local series production had to be established simultaneously across multiple international sites under demanding customer timelines and operational expectations.

The participating teams came from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds and had limited prior collaboration experience with one another. While local leadership structures existed, trust, communication, and cross-cultural alignment between locations had not yet been established.

Challenge:

The success of the programme depended on transforming geographically and culturally separated teams into one aligned international organisation capable of delivering under high operational pressure.

Key challenges included:

- Differing cultural expectations and communication styles
- Varying operational approaches and team dynamics
- Limited trust and collaboration between international locations
- Alignment of people, processes, and behaviours under tight timelines
- Creating motivation, accountability, and shared ownership across cultures

Actions:

- Led multicultural teams across international programmes
- Conducted local and international team workshops to strengthen trust, communication, and intercultural understanding
- Connected operational excellence with human collaboration through shared learning, shopfloor visits, and cross-location exchange
- Gradually integrated international teams through structured interaction and collaborative working formats
- Focused on motivation, transparency, accountability, and sustainable relationship-building across locations
- Encouraged knowledge sharing and mutual learning between culturally diverse teams

Results:

- Established a productive and highly collaborative international team environment
- Improved intercultural communication, trust, and operational alignment across locations
- Increased team stability and strengthened long-term international collaboration
- Supported more sustainable transformation and change processes within multicultural environments
- Created lasting professional relationships and networks between team members across countries