



## **CASE STUDY**

# **PURINA MILLS, INC.**

Field Management

## **OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW**

Executive staff and upper management at Purina Mills, Inc. were concerned about a company-wide situation where talented, achieving field management employees rapidly rose through "the ranks" until they reached the level of Director of Operations (General Manager). Then, they had an unacceptable high failure rate. Training was intensified but failed to result in significant improvement.

## **CLIENT OBJECTIVE**

Assess the situation, the cause of the high failure rate, and develop a plan to curb the problem.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

- Field Management Employees

## **RUSSELL ASSOCIATES' SOLUTION**

Russell Associates conducted an assessment of field management personnel to identify and assess the causes for the inability of people in these positions to succeed and advance. Russell Associates conducted an in-depth assessment of the situation by:

1. Interviewing corporate staff and over 50 management personnel at over 50 locations in order to identify causative factor(s).
2. Conducting an assessment of the Sales, Purchasing, Production, Financial Services, and Controller disciplines at the field level to identify needed skills, current skills, and the gap between current and needed skills necessary for them to be successful.
3. Assessing the quantity, quality, direction, focus, and requirements of management training from the time individuals are assigned the position of Management Trainee until they attain the position of Director of Operations.

Based on the results of the interviews and assessments, Russell Associates was contracted to develop comprehensive and coordinated training for the five field disciplines that would produce a base of well-trained individuals from which Directors of Operations would emerge.

## **TRAINING METHOD**

- Manuals (Instructor and Student)
- Performance Demonstration
- Cross-Discipline Hands-On Training

## **PROGRAM LENGTH**

- Training Time – 6 months to 2 years
- Program use – On-going

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Candidates for the program apply for and must meet specific criteria to be accepted and to remain in the program.

Trainee experiences are choreographed using a Student Manual that explains objectives, expectations, how they will be evaluated, and directs their training experiences at all disciplines.

An instructor/mentor is assigned to the trainee to manage, monitor, and evaluate the trainee. The instructor is provided with a manual that is used to schedule the trainee's learning experiences and evaluate performance.

Corporate Management receives copies of evaluations and other correspondence, as appropriate, to monitor and evaluate trainee progress and as inputs to reinforce positive performance.

## **AWARDS**

Trainees who complete the program become eligible for advancement to Director of Operations position.

## **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA**

The trainee performs a self-evaluation and the instructor evaluates the trainee using the same criteria. At each evaluation, a determination is made whether the trainee meets the standards necessary to continue in the program.

## **PROGRAM RESULTS**

The management program, in itself, attracted new employees and, when completed, created a base of quality candidates who qualified for advancement within Purina Mills' management progression program.