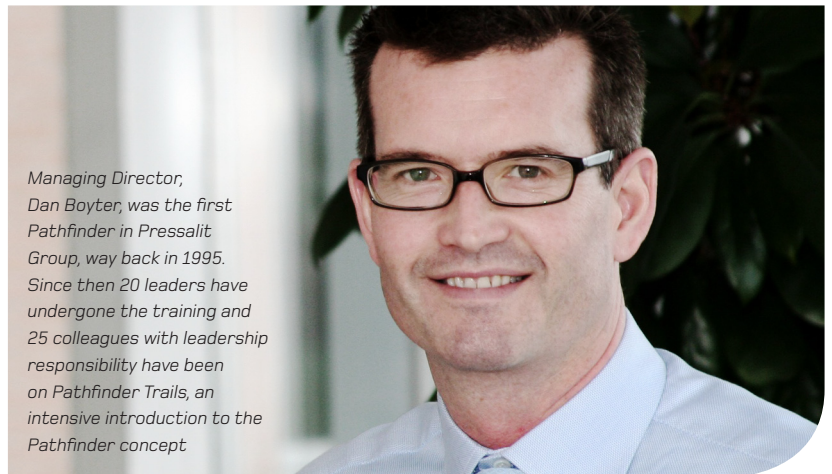




Management with Leadership

The perfect leader probably has a combination of both management and leadership. Dan Boyter, Managing Director, and Thomas Mandrup, Senior Corporate Communication Manager, both Pressalit Group, are not in doubt. The Pathfinder concept is their way to leadership. Read their story.

Right from the very start of the company in 1954, Pressalit has been imbued with certain fundamental beliefs: treat each other decently, do your best and do as you would be done by. Openness and diversity are core values. Dan Boyter and his brothers represent the third generation of managers in this family business. “They are values,” he explains, “that have been passed on from generation to generation of managers and employees. But ten years ago, in terms of management and company culture, Pressalit was still a very traditional production company in the way it regarded things. It was as if all the departments were silos, each of which interpreted these beliefs in its own way.”



Managing Director, Dan Boyter, was the first Pathfinder in Pressalit Group, way back in 1995. Since then 20 leaders have undergone the training and 25 colleagues with leadership responsibility have been on Pathfinder Trails, an intensive introduction to the Pathfinder concept

From silos to cohesive business

Dan Boyter describes how he wished to create coherence in the company and to shift it from being entrepreneur-run to a modern company. “To start with, everyone was against me. In that respect I was very grateful for my Pathfinder training, both as a person and a leader. And today nearly everything in the company works inter-departmentally. In this respect the Pathfinder programme has had an enormous effect. The programme develops exactly the kind of leaders we wish to see at work in Pressalit. This lets our beliefs and our ability to work together grow, so we can take those shared beliefs back to work and implement them in our capacity as leaders.”

A common mindset for the management team

Thomas Mandrup continues, “Like many others, we make a distinction between ‘management’ and ‘leadership’. And

sometimes we discuss the advantages of the Pathfinder programme in contrast, say, to an MBA education. But they are very different. We need both. The leadership part is about the development of each individual leader, both as a leader and a human being. The Pathfinder concept represents a common mindset for us, a shared reference and platform for the way in which we conduct our leadership. Being a good leader is exactly what you learn on the Pathfinder programme, particularly the self-insight that leads to authenticity as a human being and a leader. An MBA education, on the other hand, teaches something different: for example, the ability to evaluate, and strategically relate to all the external demands and challenges that a company such as ours is faced with. Globalisation, for example. The perfect leader is probably the one who has a combination of both.”

A few words about Pressalit Group

Pressalit started in 1954 and today it is one of Europe’s leading manufacturers of toilet seats, bathroom fittings and kitchen and bathroom solutions for physically challenged people. The concern consists of two independent divisions, Pressalit and Pressalit Care, each of which has its own brand and product area. Each division has its own goals and deals with its own selected segments, but the two divisions share a living culture, based on a common, fundamental set of values:

pressalit group

We listen, We give, We play, We take action

At the company’s headquarters in Ry, Pressalit Group’s 469 employees create an annual turnover of DKK 555.3m (2006), principally on European markets.

The leader as complete human being

Dan Boyter nods and says, “You can’t be a good leader if you don’t like people! It is essential to enjoy being with others, to take an interest in them and respect their integrity. And that requires that you are also someone of integrity, someone to be trusted. You must know your own strengths and weaknesses, so you can judge when you need to draw on other peoples’ resources and skills, without it taking anything away from you. On the other hand, you should be able to jump in and use your abilities in unexpected areas, because you know you can. Natural leadership, the core of the Pathfinder concept, is about you as a leader constantly developing your person and personality, so you know yourself, dare to trust yourself and are brave enough to act according to that knowledge and belief.

At Pressalit it is essential for us leaders to be complete human beings, so that we can deal with our colleagues as the complete human beings they are – for example, in interviews, which deal with difficult, personal and private subjects. You must also be able to sit opposite a colleague, who perhaps has many more ambitions than you can actually accommodate. In other words, you must be able to see beyond the confines of your world and see things from another person’s perspective. And you must do this genuinely, from your heart. At Pressalit we are all totally in agreement that this is the way to lead, and that we can thank the Pathfinder programme for.”

“Practise what you preach”

Dan Boyter emphasises that the good leader, according to Pressalit, also has ‘drive’, energy and will power. “These are the resources that are mobilised in leaders during the Pathfinder course. And they are essential. You need the drive of a sportsperson to motivate and constantly develop a large company like Pressalit. You must be brave enough to make decisions that affect the working lives of about 500 employees. And you must be ready to take action. We

believe one hundred percent in the axiom ‘practice what you preach!’”

The Pressalit culture is the Pressalit brand

Thomas Mandrup, who works with Pressalit’s Corporate Communication, also emphasises the significance of a cohesive business/leadership culture in relation to Employer branding. “We have been singled out, most recently in *Børsen Executive**, as an attractive employer, because of our reliability and the symbolic advantages that relate to our reputation – social awareness, for example. This is because



Thomas Mandrup,
Senior Corporate
Communication Manager

the Pressalit culture *is* our brand and it is essential for it to be rooted in its leadership. This is where the Pathfinder concept plays such a vital role. It actually builds bridges between the old culture and the new, between the leaders who have been with Pressalit for 30 to 40 years and the young, highly qualified leaders who have joined the company. In a way the Pathfinder programme has legitimised the business culture and the leadership practice we have today. That is why we also send middle managers and project leaders on Pathfinder Trails, so they get a taste of the Pathfinder concept and have their eyes opened to it.”