

# *the* **PROUTY PROJECT**

*Bigger Goals • Bolder Strategies • Better Collaboration*

## **U.S.-China Leadership Team Builds Bridges for Future Growth**

### ***How the Prouty Project facilitated team development and cross-cultural skills with senior leaders***

#### **Bigger Goals: Rapid-growth curve required more leadership capacity**

- A U.S.-based global manufacturer called CHARTAsia is on a rapid-growth curve. After purchasing a company in China, it wanted to duplicate its operations. The goal: Grow from \$700 million to \$2 billion in revenues in the next five years and build more leadership capability.
- Major obstacle: The senior leadership team, comprised of American and Chinese managers, was experiencing major discord in its interactions and communications, which led to confusion and frustration.
- CHARTAsia's president and organizational development (OD) manager realized that the breakdown would limit the company's transition and growth. Having worked with the Prouty Project in the past, the president invited the firm to build better alignment and communications among the team.

#### **Bolder Strategies: Global management tools bridge the two cultures**

With all nine senior managers in the room for the first time ever — Americans and Chinese gathered in China — the Prouty Project's Organizational Performance experts introduced a team effectiveness model, combined with cross-cultural skills, to improve the team's interactions and working dynamics. This new model provided new global management tools to turn negative behavior patterns into more positive, respectful approaches. "That's what we've been doing!" exclaimed one team member after viewing a Benjamin Zander video about the "downward spiral" that exemplified the communication gap. Interspersed throughout the three-day session were experiential team challenges to solve problems, look creatively at solving problems, and inject humor.

#### **Better Collaboration: Sustainability of learned team behaviors**

The team challenges created an atmosphere of trust and possibility. Team members learned how to work with people from different perspectives and establish a new, shared language to hold conversations in constructive ways. The models also served to define new working practices for the team, clarify roles, and establish operational behavior and agreements for getting the work done. Finally, cross-cultural tools helped each team member to understand how to relate to each other better. For example, the Chinese have a hierarchical culture that Americans need to understand to show respect for a person's privacy in communications within the team. In practice, the U.S. advisors should be more formal and respectful to the Chinese plant manager, because all of the employees are watching those interactions. They will value their own Chinese leader higher if they see the American delegates extending respect. People are now working together as a team by openly sharing ways to interact more effectively, engaging in more productive conversations, and learning from each other. A future U.S. retreat will build on the model and approaches to ensure sustainability to support the company's growth.

