

# Milestones, Inc.

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*Developing individuals and organizations one milestone at a time*

*#17 November, 2001 - January, 2002*

## CHAMPIONING CHANGE AT MATTEL

**M**attel is the best-known toy brand in the world, and generations of children have spent many happy hours playing with Mattel toys. When it comes to organizational change, however, the makers of Barbie™ and Hot Wheels™ don't play around.

In May 2000, Mattel, Inc., under new CEO Bob Eckert, began a sweeping turnaround program. A new management team was brought in, new employees were hired, new teams created, and new agendas set. "Developing people" was identified as one of the key business agendas to drive the company's overall vision of "Be-

ing the World's Premier Toy Brands – Today and Tomorrow." To support this strategy Mattel, Inc. created a new lead-

ership development department. One of the challenges for Mattel's leadership development staff was to identify strategies for integrating new people and building new teams effectively and quickly.

In May 2001, Mary Choi, Ph.D., joined Mattel as manager of organization development within the leadership development group. Her mandate was to create and implement systems and processes to drive positive change. She quickly saw the need for team-building interventions in several segments of the organization she supported to clarify roles and improve communications and interpersonal

functioning. Choi, whose doctorate is in organizational psychology, was familiar from her work at a previous company with the Behavioral Style and Values assessment tools used by Milestones, Inc. She knew that these tools would be invaluable in getting several of Mattel's new teams within the organizations she supported up to speed.

### INTERNAL CHAMPION AS TRAINER

Choi engaged Milestones, Inc. to help based on its expertise with the tools



*Mary Choi, Ph.D., Mattel's manager of organization and development, is building teams in the Barbie organization.*

### Milestones Performance Management System

1. Assess
2. Recommend
3. Implement
4. Reinforce

### Services

Coaching  
Team Building  
Strategic Planning  
Sales Management Consulting

Training in

- Leadership
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Sales

## Milestones



Madelon Miles



Brett Miles

**M**adelon graduates Nov. 4 from a 112-hour intensive program (in eight days) on personal leadership and emotional intelligence. Recognized by the State of California, the Next Level Intensive program is led by Ron Wu, Ph.D. (Psychology, University of California, Berkeley).

**B**rett graduated from the same program in July 2000. Brett and Madelon incorporate what they learn from their ongoing commitment to personal development in their work for Milestones, Inc. clients.

she had chosen. Madelon Miles suggested an "internal champion" strategy for Mattel. The key to the strategy is to train an executive of the company in the use of the appropriate tools and techniques. This internal champion then assumes the role of trainer and implements the tools over an extended period of time. Based on Choi's education and experience, this strategy was appropriate for Mattel.

Madelon ran team-building events with the Barbie Product Planning Group and the Global Information Technology Leadership Team. Choi attended the

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**mile•stone** \ mī(ə)l -stōn \ **1:** a stone set to measure distance, indicating progress toward desired goals.

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## ...CHANGE AT MATTEL

*Continued from front page*

sessions, "sponging" as much information as possible and focusing on how to effectively integrate the use of this tool in other organizations within Mattel. A quick study, Choi then began running programs on her own, including one for the IT organization in Amsterdam. At Madelon's suggestion, Choi is also pursuing professional certification in the assessment tools Milestones uses.

"The internal champion is an exciting approach," says Madelon, "because it adds credibility and accountability to the process. That increases employee buy-in and program effectiveness." Choi agrees, noting that employees sometimes see outside training as "an event" and may not accept it as wholeheartedly as they do when the training comes from a company insider.

An insider is also more aware of other factors that may impact the effectiveness of teambuilding, such as the effects of personnel promotions, brand management issues, and interdepartmental rivalries. Choi believes the internal champion is a good approach "because the insider can easily monitor and adapt to changing situations."

After conducting the initial programs, Milestones, Inc. will consult with organizational development managers as needed. The firm can provide coaching on specific issues, help refine strategies, and keep the client up-to-date with the latest tools and tactics. For organizations

implementing an extended program, the internal champion is an efficient and cost-effective solution.

"By encouraging clients to become trained and certified in specific tools, we empower them

"...THE INSIDER CAN EASILY MONITOR AND ADAPT TO CHANGING SITUATIONS."

to work independently," adds Madelon. "It's our interpretation of the famous dictum 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.'"

Coach's Clipboard

### Ask Questions that Lead out of Problems and into Solutions

Tip Often we are drawn into the content, drama, and emotions of a problem another person is expressing. Be alert. If you react and tangle with the problem, the problem can become validated and the person embedded in it...with you stuck alongside! Stay as the observer; stay in the moment, not the past or future. Avoid "What happened?" and "What might happen?" questions. Instead, ask the other person questions such as, "What is happening now?" "How do you feel?" "What can you do now?"

Example Bill comes to you and expresses anxiety about being able to complete his work on time. Rather than responding with, "What is the problem?" ask, "How are you feeling, right now?" Bill might say, "I am feeling nervous about getting the work done correctly and on time." Then you might ask, "What would make you feel less nervous?" Bill might respond, "If I had more time or less work." You: "How can you create more time or less work?" Eventually, through this line of questioning, holding to what Bill feels or can do now, you will lead to Bill discovering a solution that he accepts and owns.

*Coaches help athletes achieve top performance. Today, more and more managers and professionals rely on coaching skills to get top performance from their teams. In each issue, the Coach's Clipboard brings you valuable coaching insights.*

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