**Emma’s 1st follow up call with John, an International Participant July 2013**

**(All company and client names have been changed)**

**John: It’s up to you.**

**Em: Okay, well we’ll see how we go. So John before we dive into the action plan, it does help me just to get a bit of an overview for how long you’ve been in the role, and a little bit about the size of your team or your clients, so I can just understand your role and get into head space quickly.**

**John: Yes, very sure, I’ve been with Blacktop for last nine years, six years as an account manager, and now - when we end up in July, and three years as partner account manager for the partner Aqua in Sweden.**

**Em: Okay.**

**John: And they are the largest partner, gross partner that we have. They have turnover this year around 75 million dollars. And the overall goal for me is take them to 100 million dollars. They did 36.5 two years ago, so they doubled the last two years.**

**Em: Congratulations.**

**John: They have some fantastic numbers with them, so it’s really a great partner.**

**Em: Yes. And so have you been with that same partner for the three years.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: Great.**

**John: I moved from (previous partner) into the Department of x to take care of Aqua yes.**

**Em: Well, that’s a great growth, so well done already on things achieved.**

**John: Yes, things achieved on what we - the regular day to day business and the team on Blacktop business, it’s just - we have a hard time developing new areas, and that’s the reason why I think that was one of the areas where we have not doing a very good job together, neither we or Aqua have done a great job, so and that’s the security initiative that we have here in the action plan**

**Em: Okay. I can see that on your goal 2. So you’ve been away for three weeks, and so that must have been almost straight after the course, or maybe just a week after the course that you went away?**

**John: Yes, exactly.**

**Em: Great. The first thing that would be helpful would be to go through the three goals, but maybe just to get your recalibration on your scale of 0 to 10 so we can just get a sense if any of the goals have moved at all. And it’s absolutely fine whether they have or they haven’t. But again, that just helps me get up to speed with you.**

**John: The first thing I did when I got back was to have a meeting with my manager, of course, to talk about the training overall. And I think it was an extremely good training, one of the best I’ve joined two really, really good trainers.**

**I was very happy after the three days in Amsterdam. And then we discussed what I wanted to achieve around security he already knows that because one part we would like to have a lift on this - starting off in FY 14, now I know all that’s been going on during the current year, 2014 next year. So he’s well aware of this. I had a meeting yesterday actually with my counterpart at Aqua, my main contact, where I showed this to him very briefly and we discussed it so that we have a very close relationship with Aqua so that when we want to do something that they listen, and when they want to do something we listen.**

**So there’s really nothing that needs to be a secret in terms of what to present with Aqua. And he buys into this, my main contact at Aqua and their real goal is to do something with security. The hardest possible thing for us is to find who from Aqua will make a commitment and that’s my meeting that we are trying to set up and discuss with someone from the management team that will focus on the path to security under him as a responsibility. And we are not there yet.**

**Em: Okay. So in terms of the second goal then, I’m hearing that you’ve had the conversation with your peer at Aqua but you really need to identify who are the key people that you need to get in the workshop.**

**John: Yes and to be honest this is not something that we have to talk about from when I did the training, this is something that we’ve been thinking about and something we have been trying to do for a couple of years. But we haven’t found the right people, and they haven’t been very much connected to the idea and have really not understand the value of the security business in Sweden so far. So we are not there in terms of who to meet with.**

**We think we know who the guy is and who the team will be, but we are not there yet.**

**Em: Okay. So that’s on goal two. So would you say you’re still at a 4 out 10, or will that have moved up at all?**

**John: I don’t think that has moved up at all. It will do when we get into August I guess.**

**Em: Okay.**

**John: And that’s all for something, because it has to do with what we are doing in Sweden as well. We haven’t done much in security for the last couple of years, but we are now refocusing and we have totally new investment terms, and with more people coming in and new recruitment around security, so we will have great help from Blacktop Sweden internally as well.**

**Em: Okay. Great, so that will all align which sounds good. And let’s just decide what we need to focus on today. So with goal one has that shifted at all from your 3 out of 10 in terms of using your W1, not your W2?**

**John: Yes. And that’s something that I discussed with my manager, that we are and I have been very much focusing on where are we now. He asked me to look back, when we have our quarterly management meetings which we have once a quarter of course, with the Aqua and the Blacktop management team and we look very much on okay, how are affairs now compared to those in the same quarter last year and so on, and what should we do about it.**

**We don’t focus at all on what we are trying to achieve and why. I wouldn’t say at all, but not enough on that part and that’s something that my managers as well and Aqua and I we need to get in it - we need to get closer to each other and understand what they would like to achieve and how we can align to that. I mean they are a big CERTZ and a big Stoneaway vendor as well, and they sell a lot of different stuff and we need to try to find out where we fit in the best and how security can fit in. I think we are getting there but we are not there yet.**

**Em: Okay. And so I’m sensing because you’ve been away for three weeks John, so you only had one week, since the program you’ve actually been in the business. And it’s hard to say sort of what changes have already started to happen.**

**Of these three goals that we’ve got here, one about the quarterly business reviews, one about security and the other one about focusing on W1 and not W2, which of those goals would you like us to specifically work on today?**

**And I generally suggest people use the one that’s going to be the hardest to implement. So if it’s easy for you to implement it, and can just sort of go away and implement it now, then that’s not going to add the most value of us really brainstorming and getting in the nitty-gritty of it.**

**So of those three, which is going to be the hardest do you think to implement?**

**John: I think it’s one that what are we trying to achieve and why. That part.**

**Em: Okay. So let’s focus - lets you and I sort of delve into that now and see what comes out. What is it about that, that makes it difficult do you think?**

**John: I think we - immediately when I got back from training, I had a look at the last agenda for the management meeting, and we, as I said before, it’s not about focusing on today’s numbers and the growth areas and what areas that we don’t grow on and how we fix those. And it’s not about what we are trying to achieve in a one, two, three year, maybe five year horizon. I mean I know that Aqua have a five-year plan, I know that they need to grow their numbers pretty significantly in Sweden to make the owners happy and also the profit.**

**But to align their goals to our goals has been - I mean we sell hardware, and we think sometimes that we change that they are very close to dramatically change the outcomes for all the customers and so on, and we do in many cases. But when it comes to partners, I think we haven’t done a very good job on that part, really understanding their pain. We need to get closer to their pains in terms of concerns about profit. They have a huge turn-over, but they have a very low profit.**

**I know that we are one of the most profitable partners that they have of course, but I think we could do much, more there together and set up goals that could make them more profitable, and for us to be more successful as well. But it’s hard to find the time to meet with the right people, sit down with them, and you can’t do that in their two hour quarterly business review. We need to find other ways to meet with the people from the management team.**

**Em: Okay. So what I’m hearing is that you kind of get a sense of what needs to be done and get a sense of the opportunity, but it’s finding the time and who are the right people to meet with.**

**John: Yes and also, I mean we can believe that’s okay, a few investments, it’s a big opportunity all the opportunity in Sweden talking about security as a main topic, it’s in the top three on their mind, but we don’t really know what they are saying - when they meet with CERTZ, when they meet with Stoneaway or Juniper or any other of our competitors, how much profit do they get out of that? Where will they invest in the future?**

**We need to get - on that part we need to get closer with them. We have a good relationship but we need to get close in terms of profitability and new investments.**

**Em: So, let’s just take a moment here, John, I want to make sure what we’re going through is going to be useful. So we’re saying it’s difficult to find the find time and find who the right people are and then to really understand what they’re thinking and what’s relevant to them around the security piece.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: It’s interesting John because as we talk this through you sound so clear, what we need to get our head around is what’s the block around it. And so is it really the time, or is it the people, or it just making a priority? What is it that’s stopping this goal on action plan being to easy follow through on?**

**John: Yes. I mean I’ll tell you they are a special company; they have been growing pretty fast on just buying other companies, on acquisitions. And we know what acquisitions can do. We at Blacktop, we are a good example of a lot of good acquisitions and some bad, but most of them pretty good.**

**But Aqua I think they are - they have done a few good ones and a few bad ones. And they’ve done some in security and it didn’t work out well, they’ve done some missteps, they did take the wrong way for a couple of years down in Westminster so I think they’ve burned on the investing in security, investing in consultants, and investing in people around security, and not really seeing the money coming out of it.**

**We believe, I mean at Blacktop we believe we need to grow the security business in Sweden and especially with Aqua, they have 29 offices and they meet with a lot of customers and they don’t sell much security, security from anyone else either. But it’s one thing what we would like to accomplish, I think we need to understand is this something that Aqua sees as a priority.**

**I mean if they don’t see it as a priority sadly okay we believe that it is going to grow much, much faster than security, we are not interested in training and doing anything else with this, because we don’t believe that we are the right company for it. And that’s pretty much where we are at the moment.**

**We think something - our management team thinks there were a perfect partner for Blacktop security solution to have a big installed base of other solutions around security and they believe that we could do much, much more, and at least we can say that. But it’s harder to get Aqua to feel the same thing, okay this is what you think Blacktop, but CERTZ has approached us and we have this number of people, we will look into x to the security business and their server business or data center business and that’s where we are going to invest.**

**Em: Okay.**

**John: We need to take our plan and really sell it to them here.**

**Em: So if we use a scale of 0 to 10, and 10 is you really understand what they’re thinking at the moment, and what their priorities are, and 0 is you’re nowhere in terms of understanding what they’re thinking and where their priorities are, where are you on that scale of 0 to 10?**

**John: I would say between 5 and 6 maybe today.**

**Em: Okay.**

**John: Overall I understand the business, but when it comes to security I would say between 5 and 6.**

**Em: And how clear is your plan John for moving that up the scale so really trying to understand where they are? Do you have a clear plan? 10 is clear…**

**John: No -- my plan at the moment is to set the plan now when I’m back again.**

**Em: Okay.**

**John: If you look at the Action Plan sheet there I think this is something from the training that I would try to use on much, much more things. This is just security now, this could be used overall in - I mean Aqua have five different regions with five different regional managers. So they are more or less like five different companies. In some regions they focus very much on data center and collaboration and video and in some other regions they focus on other networks and coffee cream things and some regions they focus on something else.**

**So I need to set - I would use this as something that I would use to set the plan for all regions overall, I believe because we need to begin to - if we’re going to be good partners, I’ll manage to connect them, but they are getting so big, I believe it to be more people involved with them who will split them up into different regions. But we need to know where, what kind of investments do we need to do in a different region, and what kind of investments would they like to do together with Blacktop.**

**Em: And so let’s take a step back. So the goal that we’re focusing on is I will overall stop future initiatives and efforts with W1, not W2, yes?**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: And so as we’re talking this through, we say that kind of you’re clear on what the W1 is but we need to make sure that that’s aligned with really the client wants. It’s no good just you and your manager thinking that’s a fabulous idea if it doesn’t align with their thinking, yes?**

**John: Yes. And if you look at - I mean Aqua is the number one company that’s something that’s been used in the training that might be focusing and becoming top three with a 14% market share, that’s something that me and my manager and Aqua needs to set together because everything that we’ve done historically that’s been set together and Aqua have been very, very successful.**

**The other thing that we do that we want to accomplish and deal with Aqua and that hasn’t been really committed by them as well, has never been a success. And I guess is very common when it comes to working with Aqua and partners, that it’s easy for inter management, maybe for a manager to say oh this sounds interesting, but let’s invest $100,000 in it and we do it and nothing happened.**

**We need to get all the regions, we need to get all the solutions managers, we need to get all the people involved and trained and so on. So this is going to be a really big effort for both them as well as for us.**

**Em: Yes.**

**John: And it might stand up that they say that this is not going to be a focus for us. We will not invest in security, we will not do this, this is not - I mean in that case we would probably use this and go to another partner, because we need to have someone taking the lead in security.**

**Em: So there’s almost a couple of different parts to this John as we look at it. There’s this one particular, this piece around Aqua and finding out their W1 and the plan for how we are going to find out what their W1 is and is it aligned with our plan, yes?**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: There’s also another piece that comes to my mind. I don’t know if this resonates with you that in fact you that in fact you could get into the habit of using W1 in every meeting you go to, whether it’s with your manager, whether it’s you know with a colleague or whether it’s with Aqua just to actually get yourself into that mindset. I’m thinking W1, not W2.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: And so the kind of a detailed piece around the Aqua, but also the mindset shift which - you know how many, let’s just think, how many conversations a day do you think you have where you could focus more on W1 than W2, how many a day?**

**John: Typically, I would say that’s at least, that happens every day of course, I don’t know if it’s one, two, three maybe. But it’s a lot and that’s the main theme that I’ve got up and that I will take with me from this training is to focus more on W1 because obviously I was a little bit embarrassed when I look at the agenda for a quarterly business review with the management team where we focus on pretty much only where we are now.**

**Of course they explain for us okay this is our 2015 plan, this is the turnover and the profit that we would like to achieve and this is how it’s going now, but we are not really digging into - it’s been a very high level. It’s pretty much on what you can learn by reading the website.**

**Em: And what…**

**John: For what Aqua tried to achieve overall okay, will be the number one IT company in Sweden, oh that sounds great but as you said it can be used in much smaller conversation, in pretty much everything you do.**

**Em: For sure.**

**John: I can use it at home as well.**

**Em: So let’s say you know there’s an average two conversations a day maybe more, and maybe it’s one, but just say roughly ten conversations a week.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: We’ll keep it to your working week John, you’re welcome to use it outside of work, but we’ll keep it to a working week, where you’ve got an opportunity to reprogram your mind and sometimes I think a change like weightlifting yes, so your quarterly business review meeting, we might actually say you know what that’s a 30 kilogram weight, that’s a really big area where you can focus, switch the agenda from W2 to W1. But equally a five kilogram weight might just be when a colleague picks up the phone and says to you John we have to do this immediately and you could go into solution mode, or you could say hang on a second, what are we really trying to achieve with this. And that’s just a five kilo weight.**

**And so if we just saved using them through them till the quarterly business review meeting, it’s a big switch to go from nothing to 30 kilos, where as if constantly on a daily basis, we’re saying oh that’s a five kilo, that’s a ten kilo, do you see what I mean. So it’s about building up your muscle around switching your mindset.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: So how could you do that John? How could you build that muscle?**

**John: In a way I - yesterday, I actually spent a day at Aqua yesterday, and most of the people are on vacation but one lady from inter plant sales came to me and said oh John you’re the partner account manager for Blacktop, you must know if this - if this switch can handle as many users as over a thousand user, or whatever the question was, it was a technical question.**

**And usually I make that pretty easy for them, okay, because I know the answer is either yes or no, so I could have answered, but that will not help them when they have an issue the next time when I’m not there. So what I did - I didn’t think about what we are trying to achieve and why, but I used it instead of just answering we have something that we call partner help line that we just started off there last year.**

**And partner help line is where if you don’t know a question, a technical question or something you just call partner help line, and we have technical people answering there. And I instead of just giving her the question, I asked okay what are you trying to achieve, (hang on.**

**Em: No problem.**

**John: Strange. I’m working from home and someone was really was knocking on my door now, [00:22:17] reason why - so I said okay you are asking me because you need to let answer in RFP, okay,) call partner help line, they will get to you the best answer. Because that’s going to help her using partner help line the next time when there is no one there.**

**Em: Yes.**

**John: So I mean the thing could be used as you said pretty much day in and day out. How to accomplish it, it’s about - maybe I should have put a screen in front of my desk as just a reminder that please remember W1 as often as possible. Sometimes it’s not possible to use of course.**

**Em: For sure.**

**John: Well how would you do?**

**Em: Certainly, you know it could be as simple as having a post-it note that says W1 or something like a screen saver or something on your phone, so that it reminds you. Yes, that’s one way to do it.**

**To give you another example, sometimes people will have a little check sheet where they score themselves at the end of each day, you know how much today have I focused on W1? And you just give yourself a score on a scale of 0 to 10.**

**And what you’re doing is you’re encouraging your mind to just remembering, focusing on W1, so that as they come up and you know you review through the day, what were the times where I missed it, where I could have used it.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: And often it’s when we’re in a hurry, and when we’re under pressure that we - you know and that’s the reality. But the more you reflect, the next time, ah-ha, you can notice I’m under pressure, I’ve really got to concentrate here on bringing it to W1, not just leaping to W2 or W3.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: Let’s think so we’ve got the post-it note, we’ve got screen saver, we’ve got reflection at the end of the day, what else do you think…**

**John: I think the reflection at the end of the day could be very useful, because that’s something that really - I mean it makes you think. A reminder is of course a reminder, but also you can still make this the reminder, and see if it’s one, two, three, four, because I don’t if it’s today, maybe it’s more than five, six calls and meetings per day where we could use this.**

**Em: That’s interesting, we could actually at the end when you’ve done your reminders - reflections sorry, you could actually say you know what there were much more opportunities than I thought.**

**John: Yes. And I believe and this could be an internal meeting as well. We have a meeting for marketing on Friday this week, where we’re going to discuss okay what presentations for a specific - something that we’ll do in October now, and I don’t know if the marketing department were thinking on what goals we are trying to achieve. They are placed centrally, okay, we can get this out. Why.**

**So I think this could be a good - I really - I did show this to our general manager when I got back from the training, because he passed my desk, and he asked how was the training? I got yes, it was fantastic, and I showed him what we are trying to achieve and why and we discussed the last course of this interview, actually we had a two and a half hour, and it took three and a half hour, and we spend 80% of the time discussing what’s not going well, and where we are now and what of course we could do about it, and not really focusing on where - because we would be much, much more successful in everything that we do if we understand, and if we do it together, if we go and set goal and we’re coming away with this is what we want to do together, not just as two different parts.**

**Em: So John why don’t we have the reflection at the end of each day and whether you want to put a note in your calendar about it, whether you have a notebook that you can just take a note at the end of each day, maybe a discipline before you leave or whatever; and score yourself out 0 to 10.**

**And then if you - if there’s a couple times either when it’s worked really well, and you can see a win from it, or times when you’ve tried to do it, but it hasn’t really worked, you haven’t managed to switch the focus, what I would love is that we can bring that to the next call and you and I can really brainstorm, and say, okay, well why did it work in that scenario and not work in that scenario. So that we can really start to look at the skills underneath actually getting that happening. Does that make sense?**

**John: Yes. I’ll put that into my calendar.**

**Em: Excellent.**

**John: Yes, I’ll put a reminder every day at five o’clock maybe to put down how many times I’ve used it.**

**Em: Perfect. Because then when we’ve got some specifics, you and I can really kind of dig into it and say okay what’s the next step on it.**

**John: Yes.**

**Em: Okay, good stuff. Now before we close off today’s call John is there anything that we need to go through around this plan that you’re going to create for getting - understanding Aqua’s W1? Is there anything that we need brainstorm now, or do you just need to go away and get that done?**

**John: I think I need to sit down with it, I need to sit down with my manager, when he’s back from vacation and everyone is back working again, because that’s been the main problem that as you said, doing the training, working a week after and then three weeks’ vacation and getting back to - the brain is not in place at the moment.**

**Em: Understand.**

**John: It could have been better. So I need just to sit down focusing on it, and I’m working now for two weeks, and I’m going to have a couple more weeks of leave as well, so that’s a problem in Sweden that in July and August it’s - it used to be of July but now it’s pretty much dead in August as well.**

**Em: Yes, in Australia it happens in January time, just everything is down. Okay. When we next speak then, we’ll check in with how you’ve gone with the reflection and using the W1, and we’ll also check in with how you’ve gone with sitting down with your manager and getting the plan together for understanding Aqua’s W1, knowing how important that that is.**

**And so we will talk on both of those next time, see how you’ve progressed, and then we’ll see where that leaves us with our action plan.**

**John: Yes, that’s perfect.**

**Em: Now, we don’t have a time for August, is that because you’re off in August?**

**John: Yes, I think I’m pretty much off in August, I think it’s September that’s the next time. But I don’t think that the date has been set.**

**Em: We’re next to speak the 12th of September, but is there a way we can move that earlier in the day John?**

**John: Absolutely, no problem at all.**

**Em: If we could move it to the same time as today, 10:15 your time.**

**John: Yes, absolutely. Will you send that or…**

**Em: Yes, I will, I’ll send that appointment through to you.**

**John: Oh, that’s not a problem.**

**Em: Okay wonderful. John enjoy your time off in August, we’ll speak September so by then you will have gather quite a lot of data, and we’ll see how we’re tracking.**

**John: Perfect.**

**Em: Good to work with you today.**

**John: Good to work with you as well, thank you.**

**Em: Thank you, bye.**

**John: Okay, bye.**