



Co-creating success

Through a clear and honest approach to great leadership and teamwork, coaching and consulting company Evan-Jones International aims to move away from the Norwegian culture of niceness in management style and towards a more direct style, which they believe creates safety, trust and motivation amongst co-workers.

By Line Elise Svanevik | Photos: Evan-Jones International

Evan-Jones International specialises in three key areas, including strategy and organisational development, where they help build a structure within the company and plan a strategy for where their clients want to go.

Secondly, through leadership, personal and team development, they assist leaders of all different levels through coaching.

The company's vision is 'co-creating success', as they strongly believe that working with the clients, rather than simply for them, is crucial to creating permanent changes.

Last, but not least, they work with sales and marketing, which is often about customer relationships – from sales and market strategy to sales management,

in-store training for shop assistants and digital sales optimisation through social media.

Tailor-made development

"We work with the development of organisations, and when you do that, you have to develop the people within them," says CEO and owner Roger Årdal. "We go into each company and tailor our programme to fit their needs and wishes, as each individual company has their own set of challenges that have to be addressed. Some of our clients are already doing really well and only want to get better, so it's not just dealing with those who are struggling and need help."

From the initial chats about the ultimate goal of the coaching and consulting experience, Årdal and his team moves towards gaining insight and understanding of where their clients are, which helps them determine the route to take. After this is achieved, they create a plan of how to put it into action.

'Pracademic' approach

Based in Sandnes in southern Norway, but working with clients from all over Norway, Evan-Jones International was set up by the former rock musician and author John Evan-Jones, whom Årdal first encountered 15 years ago.

"He had a 'pracademic' – practical and academic – approach, which fascinated me," explains Årdal. "What that means is that he worked with models from the academic world, but at the same time he was very practical in his approach. Our clients don't necessarily want an education – they want development within their role."

Daring to be honest

Årdal believes that in the Norwegian management style, top leaders are often afraid

to be clear and direct in their approach, out of fear of upsetting their employees. "It's a culture of niceness, where democracy stands tall, so everyone needs to have an opinion on everything. The result, however, is that there's not a clear leader, which I see as one of the most challenging aspects of our work," he says. "We strive to get people to set aside time for leadership and to brave being honest and clear in their leadership style. They need to know where they're going and what they're expecting, which is something I've passionately believed in for many years now – the power of leadership. Some of our clients say: 'but if I'm too honest, no one will want to work for us'; but I believe that sending clear messages creates security amongst employees."

In their own style of business, a trademark of Evan-Jones International is daring to be completely honest and challenging their clients into becoming more conscious of where they are and what it takes to get where they want to be.

Inspiring change

Årdal believes in achieving consciousness in order to develop as a leader, team

or business. He does not think that he can teach anyone anything, because learning is a permanent change of behaviour. "We can inspire them and add our expertise, but people have to make the change for themselves, which is where coaching comes in – based on creating personal awareness," he explains. "It's always challenging to work with change, even if you want it – but as agents of change, that's our job."

Being a good leader, Årdal suggests, comes down to taking responsibility for one's environment. "Some people say: 'I wish I had different employees'; but we say 'you get the employees you deserve' – either you need to develop them or you need to let them go, to be quite blunt," he adds. "Being under the impression that someone is going to come in and fit straight into their role and develop it is like believing in Santa Claus. You have to work for it."

For more information, please visit:
www.evan-jones.no



Left: CEO and owner of Evan-Jones International, Roger Årdal, is passionate about a more direct leadership approach. Right: The team at Evan-Jones International helps leaders reach their potential through carefully tailored programmes.