



Change Management in the Private Sector

Egremont Group with Walgreens (WBA)

This is a story of scale. It started with a “Can you help?” phone call and snowballed to a multi-million-dollar benefits case for the world’s third largest retailer. Delivered over two years by 21 consultants and 900 client ‘change agents’, it was a test of cross – cultural, cross – continent, cross – states callable and sustainable transformational change that has so far directly touched around 50,000 employees. Walgreens Boots Alliance in the US has 250,000 employees and 8,200 stores. Known for its aggressive growth strategy, it has the most number of retail pharmacy stores and employees in the US. But big isn’t always best. In recent years, Walgreens had lost its number one position to its rival, CVS.

Alex Gourlay, the then CEO Health & Beauty Division, Alliance Boots in the UK, had been appointed to lead Walgreens and transform its fortunes. He knew what he wanted to do, and he knew he needed some help, so he called Egremont.

We had worked together before and he knew we had the retail pharmacy expertise, the business transformation expertise and a consulting approach that was right for a complex cross – cultural job.

We fielded a blended team of employees and associates who between them were change experts, innovators and industry experts, tasked with leading change on a massive scale, working on strategy execution, operating model and organisation design, process and operational excellence and leadership across head office and the stores.

It’s not only our experience and practical application of methodologies that helps us to do our job. It’s also who we are and the way we partner with our clients that enables us to dig deep beneath the surface to create an environment of sustainable continuous improvement. Yes, the financial results are good, but it’s more than that. This has been a cultural transformation: there is increased pride and capability, greater collaboration, better understanding of how to deliver excellent customer service, less hierarchy and more time spent on doing what’s right for the customer. All of that delivers results- and will keep on doing so, long after we have left the building.