



Accelerating Collaboration in a Fast-Paced Software Development Company



**ORGANIZATION**

Outfit7



**INDUSTRY**

Software Development



**ABOUT**

Outfit7 is a software developer based in Europe. Outfit7 develops entertainment apps including Talking Tom, an international record-breaking sensation which boasted 300 million downloads within 19 months of its release.

**CHALLENGE**

Samo and Iza Login established software developer Outfit7 in 2010 with a mission of “bringing fun and entertainment to all.” As part of this mission, Samo and Iza also consciously created a company culture of fun, respect, and collaboration. In June 2010, Outfit7 launched Talking Tom, a smartphone app featuring an interactive animated cat that repeats everything a user says. Talking Tom was an immediate hit, achieving a record 300 million downloads within 19 months.

By early 2013, with the success of Talking Tom and the rest of the “Talking Friends” franchise, Outfit7 had grown from its original 8 employees to 45 employees scattered across offices in Cyprus, England, Slovenia, South Korea, and the United States. As a result of this growth, cracks started developing in the culture. These initial challenges prompted Samo and Iza to worry about their ability to maintain the culture given the additional growth they were projecting. They knew intuitively what they wanted the culture to look like, but they couldn’t articulate it in a way that would allow them to scale it as the company grew.

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**IZA LOGIN**

Cofounder & Deputy CEO | Outfit7

**SOLUTION**

As they were struggling with this issue, Samo and Iza came across Arbinger’s *Leadership and Self-Deception*. Reading the book, they quickly realized that Arbinger could provide a framework for fostering the culture they were trying to institutionalize.

As a first step, Outfit7 brought in an Arbinger facilitator to conduct a two-day workshop with its leadership team. Going into that session, many members of the team were skeptical about the need to work differently. However, during the session they made important discoveries about how they were in fact working with an inward mindset and contributing to the cracks that had developed in the company culture. More importantly, the workshop resulted in a number of team

members resolving some of the disagreements that had cropped up among them, laying the groundwork for more collaborative work going forward.

The team was enthusiastic about the results of the initial workshop and wanted to ensure they could successfully embed an outward mindset in their day-to-day work. They also wanted to spread this way of working throughout the company. An Arbinger facilitator returned two months after the initial workshop to lead the team through a series of half-day implementation training sessions. In those sessions, the team members learned how to utilize frameworks that would allow them to plan, execute, and evaluate their work in a way that would ensure they would work with an outward mindset on an ongoing basis.

In addition, Arbinger subsequently trained five members of the leadership team to be internal facilitators. Arbinger prepared these internal facilitators to support their fellow leadership team members in their ongoing efforts to work with an outward mindset as well as to train and support the rest of the company's employees to work with heightened levels of collaboration and accountability.

Every one of Outfit7's current 200 employees has now participated in Arbinger's core workshop as well as an implementation training. Outfit7's own internal facilitators have trained over 90% of these employees.

## RESULTS

Outfit7's leaders report that they now listen more objectively to each other and, as a result, are more open to reevaluating their perceptions of others or of situations. This enables them to see issues differently, overcome their differences with each other, and focus on results.

According to Iza, prior to introducing Arbinger, Outfit7 employees tended to focus solely on their own tasks and didn't think about how their work was affecting others.

However, now that working with an outward mindset is the norm across the company, employees regularly look for opportunities to help their colleagues.

Rok Zorko, Outfit7's vice president of product development, is a case in point. According to Rok, he would typically brush off what he deemed to be "obscure requests coming from obscure departments," and would assume that whatever he was doing had to be more important than what others were asking of him. Now, according to Rok, "I don't see it that way anymore. I recognize that these people obviously want to get something done, something valuable for the company. Maybe it's not as important as I think my work is, but it's obviously important to them so I'll go the extra mile today—I'll do it. The time that I was previously using to get upset about it is usually the time that it takes to get it done."

Outfit7's employees are also discovering that when they help their colleagues, their colleagues are more likely to help them in return. As a result, the company has developed a culture in which people are not afraid to ask for help. According to Iza, "People are more effective, people are more responsible. What we have learned through Arbinger is good for them as well as for the company." This was echoed by Igor Lautar, vice president of technology, who believes that the company is achieving results more efficiently and, as a result, is accomplishing more.

This accelerated collaboration has allowed Outfit7 to strengthen its culture even as its workforce has more than doubled since Arbinger started working with the company. The business results have been spectacular as well. By October 2015, 2.5 years after Outfit7 started applying the Arbinger approach, Outfit7's Talking Friends had generated over 3 billion app downloads, attracted more than 250 million active users each month, and achieved more than 3.5 billion views of its videos on YouTube. Outfit7 believes this change in how they work is permanent. As Rok says about the Arbinger approach, "Once you have this knowledge, you can't 'unthink' it."