

# The OCP Group's new challenge: energy liberation and corporate transformation

by

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## Overview

The OCP Group, Morocco's leading company and a major exporter of phosphates, underwent radical change between 2006 and 2011 making it a high-performance and competitive global leader. After the CEO, Mostafa Terrab, had recruited a number of young executives and launched an ambitious plan of further training for them, he thought it was necessary to make use of the energy and talents which they represented for the company, as well as the success of the first transformation curve, to map out and reinvent the Group's future. Hicham El Habti was in charge of the co-ordination of this process which was called the 'Movement'. Gradually, the efforts undertaken showed that this ambition was broadly shared within the Group as the employees appeared very clear-sighted about it. Over a period of a few months, the effects of the process throughout the Group satisfied the CEO's expectations. As a result, he gave the 'Movement' the task of transforming the Group. Hicham El Habti explains how this process was carried out, the resulting challenges, and the opportunities it gave to the management of the company.

Report by François Boisivon • Translation by Rachel Marlin

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By the beginning of 2016, I can safely say that OCP was well recognised as a company which had made many impressive transformations over a ten-year period. This is clearly the case when one analyses the changes made by its executives, managers and employees. After he was appointed OCP's CEO in 2006, Mostafa Terrab started changing an administration which was on its last legs into a group which was ready to dominate the international market. This change was even the subject of a talk at the *École de Paris du management* in 2012<sup>1</sup>. We regarded the success of two bond issues in 2014 and 2015 as an indication of our achievement and potential. We had become the leading reference in our sector. We had excellent results and demonstrated that we were always seeking to expand, as our unorthodox industrial investment plan showed. Even though our sector was still competitive, we had no reason to doubt our strength and ability to maintain our position as leader in the market.

Nevertheless, our CEO thought that this situation did not go far enough and did not allow us to explore the full range of the company's potential, and to challenge our Group with a plan which could exceed its true possibilities. OCP should always be growing and continually exploiting its potential rather than being content with being one step ahead of everyone else.

Mostafa Terrab had always thought that the organisation and existing processes were not adequate to liberate all the individual - and especially collective - potentials of employees within the company, which is one of the strategic approaches on which he had based the company's 'rebirth'.

It is for this reason that at the beginning of 2016 he expressed his intention to commit the Group to a new development cycle, a 'second transformation curve', benefiting from the dynamism and knowledge learned from the first curve.

### Liberating energy

The CEO had the feeling that the Group's new development cycle would be generated by focussing on its human capital, which was its most strategic resource. One of the most pertinent and visible transformations in the structure of OCP over the past ten years has been that the average age of its employees has dropped from 45 to 35.

The CEO considered that it was time to adapt the company to this dimension by 'liberating its employees' energy in order to allow the Group to bring about the development cycle which it needs'.

The CEO was well aware that the path he had chosen for the Group was likely to challenge management on all levels. 'Liberating energy' involves giving employees the opportunity to express themselves and to reconsider their decisions. It is also about agreeing to make a paradigm change, questioning beliefs and well-established models, and devising new ways of thinking. It therefore involves changing the management status quo and managerial practices in the workplace.

This paradigm change can be illustrated by Douglas McGregor's two theories describing models of workforce motivation whereby employees do not want to oppose decisions from their management hierarchy. They include decisions about organisation and the system (Theory X) and participative management (Theory Y). The X and Y theories should be able to coexist, complement each other and be expressed, as the CEO told his management team, 'Our legitimacy of representing Theory X depends on our credibility of representing Theory Y'.

Over several weeks, he organised numerous work sessions with the management team in order to devise a group plan which incorporated the many ways in which this energy could be liberated. It involved a great deal of work, and was a major challenge for the Group. The CEO put me in charge of the operation of this process.

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1. Pascal Croset and Amar Drissi, "OCP: the anatomy of a radical transformation", Business Life seminar, École de Paris du management, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Committing the company to this path meant leaving the relative comfort of the existing model although there was no need to do so, and immediately adopting this dynamic process in a voluntary and 'no-obligation' way.

## The longest day

On April 4th 2016, after three months of discussions and group work sessions, general management was ready to commit to the new phase. We met with fifty of our employees whom we had chosen because they were representative of the company's diversity, in terms of their age, sex, geographical location and job description. In the course of this day, we explained our plan and asked these employees to commit themselves to this new process by becoming leaders of this transformation.

We launched ourselves into this initiative with the certainty that we would reach the desired goal, but at the same time with a great deal of uncertainty about the means and ways in which we would get there. This is why we called this process a 'Movement' rather than a 'project' as the latter is a word used within the company and evokes schedules, timetables, deadlines, pre-defined results, and so on.

During the April 4th meeting, we discussed the opinions of twenty employees who, prior to this meeting, had anonymously answered a questionnaire including the following questions: 'What is your vision for OCP?', 'What are its assets?', and 'What obstacles are in its way?' These interviews gave employees the opportunity to express their expectations and, above all, their ambitions and commitment to the Group. Their answers were expressed in about two hundred and fifty catchwords or phrases which were relayed to the audience.

The nature of the discussions during this launch-day set the tone for the 'Movement' and outlined our thinking regarding this process. Everyone understood the need to 'chart his course' during this 'journey' which was certainly a direction chosen by management whose 'commitment' was obvious, but it was equally built on suggestions made by the employees. The 'strength' shown by general management and its executives to call themselves into question is the sign of a 'cultural change'. Everyone was asked to put forward suggestions.

Therefore, April 4th, 2016 was the day when we did not discuss contracts or pre-defined strategies, but agreed to a common ambition, based on three major directions: to make OCP a global group in the next five to ten years; to make it strongly digitally-based; and to create a company with enterprising employees.

## Learning how to be free

General management made it very clear that it did not really know the course necessary for this transformation which would result in this new, desired cycle of development. It asked its employees to bring about this change. In other words, it was the responsibility of OCP employees to outline the terms of the process, find the solution, and define the topics, teams and methodology.

General management promised to listen to them, support them, and guide them in discussions which were intended to be positive without predetermining or influencing the direction to be taken.

### *Qualifying not quantifying*

The fifty employees present that 'first day' in April were trailblazers. Their aim was to disseminate the process very quickly according to a rhythm and format which they were free to define themselves. The three targets of OCP's objective – to make OCP a global group, to be strongly digitally-based, and to have a company with enterprising employees – resulted in a 'discussion day' organised one week after the launch of the 'Movement'. These debates gave rise to 'Situations', the name we gave to autonomous groups of employees who put forward proposals and suggestions with the aim of launching creative action and to generate revenues for the OCP Group.

Despite the absence of a pre-defined strategy, these groups turned out to be very creative. They demonstrated their ability to react intelligently in certain situations, substituted the lack of control by establishing a form of self-regulation, and created their own methodology.

The ‘advice process’ was at the heart of this transformation process. It described the consultation of all those concerned by the subject being implemented in the process, and helped people to think about and to take into consideration its impact on our internal and external ecosystem. It is this ‘advice process’ which enabled us to conceive and enhance the ‘second curve’ of development mentioned earlier.

### *Converting the industrial site managers*

Because of the enthusiasm of these trailblazers, the spread of the process advanced quickly with its launch at the executive management level. Industrial operations management identified four cross-departmental ‘Situations’ which were the basis of discussion about the industrial management system. It also launched local workshops on production sites which, in a way, were the equivalent of Michelin’s ‘demonstrator units’ on which Michelin’s transformation was based<sup>2</sup>. Each industrial site chose a local experiment/experimental workshop where new projects related to this aim of liberating employee energy could be tested.

At the present time, more than four thousand employees are involved in the ‘Movement’, and employees in charge of industrial operations are also significantly engaged in this. This widespread mobilisation eradicated the historical divide which existed in some people’s minds between industry (which had the false reputation of being more traditionalist) and the other functions in the company. OCP was able to establish this transformation in its specific workings and to make it part of the every-day modalities of the company thanks to the enthusiasm for the ‘Movement’ demonstrated by the different sites. Last year, our oldest site increased production by almost 7% compared to its allocated budget due to this dynamic of liberating energies.

## **‘Situations’, or disruption inside the company**

This ‘Movement’ may appear paradoxical because it was based on the management’s ‘top-down’ desire to encourage initiatives from the ‘bottom-up’. However, this is not the case.

Today, about forty ‘Situations’ (autonomous groups organised around subjects initiated by the groups themselves) have emerged from the three strategic directions of the ‘Movement’ (to be a global group; to be focussed on digital development; and to have enterprising employees), and all have created additional value. OCP Technologies is one of these ‘Situations’. An employee in charge of maintenance at one of our industrial sites came up with the idea. He was convinced that we could broaden our production, and also produce some of the elements necessary to improve the functioning of our production lines. This in-house entrepreneur (or ‘intrapreneur’) presented his project to us, carried out a market study, drew up a business plan, launched feasibility studies, and so on. We supplied him with the resources necessary to carry out his initiative.

Even our head office is in the process of changing. It no longer reflects the administrative organisation which characterised it before. We have now created spaces for innovation - ‘fablabs’ - where autonomous and cross-departmental groups can discuss strategic issues.

The ‘Situations’ have helped us to strengthen our link with the Mohammed VI Polytechnique University (UM6P) which we asked to help us because of its expertise and its unique innovation ecosystem (of incubators, ‘fablabs’, an R&D department, and so on). This corresponds perfectly to the CEO’s vision for the Group and for UM6P, namely that OCP incubates the university which in turn will incubate the ‘new’ OCP.

## **A new culture for a new organisation**

Naturally, because this dynamic process was voluntary, connection to the ‘Movement’ took place at varying speeds. The executive directors are starting to integrate the ‘Movement’ into the way in which they make decisions. These

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2. Bertrand Ballarin, “Finding a new model of organisation and management at Michelin”, Business Life seminar, École de Paris du management, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

new practices are still tentative, but they already constitute a positive contribution and represent a significant change in the work climate and how we work together.

Ideas, which until recently had not been used very much in the company, are now coming into play, and changing the way in which the company works. These include the concepts of subsidiarity and facilitation embodied in new job functions such as 'facilitators' and 'resource managers' which are essential for the implementation of 'shared – or distributed – leadership' and group intelligence. These ideas are starting to be mentioned in the context of strategy and the methods involved in various departments. In this way, they are part of the initial elements of the new corporate culture which is taking shape.

Consequently, a spirit of trust is being fostered. This helps integration (especially with groups which are independent) in a process of openness where all the entities, subsidiaries and sites can participate. We realise that we are asking a great deal of our employees in their ability to listen to each other, but we are doing so because we recognise that this results in knowing oneself well, and having knowledge of and respect for others. Finally, and most importantly, people are increasingly motivated, and are increasingly happy to do their jobs.

### *All the layers of the company*

A year after the process started, we noticed that the managers' role was to promote and personify the spirit of the 'Movement', to support and to co-ordinate the various initiatives, and to encourage employees to share their methods and practices. Additionally, the executives' role was to ensure the link between managers and operators by adopting a position of 'resource manager' and 'facilitator'. Asking executives to carry out their jobs slightly differently encouraged supervisors (in charge of sites) to become more autonomous, and enabled and encouraged operators on the ends of assembly lines to put forward ideas and assume the responsibility for doing so.

As a result of these initiatives, the 'Movement' moved up the hierarchy towards management level, and worked in both directions, creating continuous loops from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up', and so on.

### *A mix which reconciles knowledge with experience*

Production should no longer stop because of a lack of synergy. This decision recognises the spirit of group intelligence and sharing. Operators make it known that if one of them lacks certain raw materials, they can handle the problems themselves, without notifying their superiors. Similarly, engineers, who were ordinarily in charge of managing teams of three or four hundred people (who often had already been working for the company for thirty years when their future bosses were graduating from engineering school), evaluating them, confirming their absence from work, and organising holiday timetables, have been directed towards a more educational role. For example, the most experienced operators are able to identify the quality of the phosphoric acid by smell, whereas newly-recruited, young engineers are incapable of doing this. On the other hand, young engineers understand the rationality of the processes. They have to explain this to the operators and train their teams about chemical phenomena. Supervisors' understanding and talents have increased, as have their demands on executives, which has led to a positive spiral whereby they are improving themselves.

### *Dedicated times and areas*

Most of the initiatives taken to date have concentrated on the work environment because operators asked for meeting rooms purely for this purpose, and not rooms which were usually used as control rooms. These new areas have different names and involve new forms of organisation. For example, there are morning meetings lasting thirty minutes where the aim is to analyse performance. This new organisation has itself generated a new principle of spontaneous meetings: we now have 'tea-break' meetings (mint tea is an institution in Morocco), lasting about ten minutes, which are called when there are problems which sporadically emerge. These meetings have an important impact on operators who take considerable initiatives.

## A process which is constantly being renewed

The integration of new practices has paradoxically led to thinking about ‘disintegration’ because our project does not intend to replace the old system with a new system which itself, sooner or later, will no longer exist. The fluidity and flexibility of these new practices generates a process capable of constantly renewing itself in line with the Group’s strategic imperatives. The system should move forward by integrating group intelligence and the ‘advice process’, and make them a sign of corporate identity, structuring our actions within the company.

Once we realised the relevance of the work undertaken – which was difficult because there was strong opposition, although this showed that people were free to voice their opinions and that therefore the process was being conducted democratically and correctly – we realised that we had to continue to ‘roll out’ the deployment (notably in terms of human resources), and at the same time attempt to avoid the pitfall of determining the future stages of the process in advance.

The different dynamics have begun to allow a new management system to emerge which will enable each of the twenty-three thousand OCP employees to integrate the Group’s strategic curve, and thereby make OCP a socially responsible, African company which is active, ambitious, and has global aspirations, yet is fixed on a firm national foundation.

## Discussion



### Mutual learning

**Question:** *What were the autonomous groups’ work methods? How many groups were there? How long did the group discussions last? What happened during their meetings with general management? Could you tell us a little more about your background and why Mostafa Terrab recruited you?*

**Hicham El Habti:** I was the top graduate from the École Polytechnique in 2001 and from the Ponts et Chaussées (*Grandes Ecoles*) engineering school in 2003. I started my professional career at Ernst & Young in Paris. Two-and-a-half years later, I decided to go back to Morocco where, at the age of 26, I discovered ‘management in the field’ as a result of my experience managing two SMEs, one in the service sector and the other in the craft industry. This period enabled me to improve my managerial skills, and I was lucky enough to make use of them when I started working for OCP in 2013 where I was given the responsibility of the management control team and business steering. My main priority in this job was to create an environment where executives could be autonomous and ‘in-house’ clients (in other words, the executive directors and the production site directors) could express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Regarding my appointment by the CEO to manage the ‘Movement’, I was certainly one of a group of OCP colleagues who were considered capable of carrying out this project. I was able to demonstrate my right to be in this role due to the support and trust which top management gave me, and I am extremely grateful to them for this. However, none of this would have been possible without the support of my peers and colleagues, who not only believed in my ability to carry out this project successfully, but were also constantly committed to the process and stood by me. Even though I was the person appointed to take on this role, I always felt that I had them by my side throughout the process. I became aware of my responsibilities very quickly. Given the extent of the spread of the ‘Movement’, I share my job today with other colleagues who handle other aspects.



The working methods used in the workgroups are decided by those taking part in the groups. However, we insisted on the integration in these group discussions of the 'advice process' as a tool to supplement the themes defined by those involved, as well as the need to open the spectrum to other professions, subsidiaries, sites and so on as I mentioned before. The group participants determine the amount of time they want to spend on the 'Situations'. At the end of a year, there were about one hundred workgroups.

To date, we have organised three meetings between various 'Situations' throughout the company and general management. These meetings took place in a room chosen specially for the occasion in order to encourage the spirit of sharing and interactivity among those present.

Very recently we decided to transform physically our head office. We are creating more meeting spaces and making use of the walls for 'visual management' with a view to creating places which are conducive to sharing information, group intelligence and open-mindedness.

## The key: support from industrial sites

**Q.:** *Maintaining a dynamic is undoubtedly a key to success, but how do you manage this in a context where there are many elements (such as opposition from certain levels of management) which are 'running out of steam'?*

**H. E. H.:** You are right. In order for the movement to keep going, it has to be maintained. From the very beginning, we were aware of a 'contagion' effect, like a disease. This surprised all of us. Of course, this flow led to a flow in the opposite direction, and some adjustments had to be made, but the end result has remained largely positive, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Let me add that I should also mention a phenomenon which is essential to the dynamics of the 'Movement'. Three of the Group's executive directors, two of whom are responsible for the industrial sector (production and development), adopted the 'Movement' straightaway in their managerial departments. Had this not been the case, 'the Movement' would have been just a cross-departmental initiative, whereas it is now very clearly at the heart of the system. The commitment of these three directors was a wonderful opportunity to stimulate growth of the 'Movement' and give it added credibility. Furthermore, the top management of these executive directors' departments validated their commitment. There was clearly a degree of 'wait-and-see' which is normal. What is important is that there was a critical mass, including at the heart of the departments and therefore at the core of the system, which jumped on the 'Movement' bandwagon. Because these dynamics proved to be upward-spiralling, the process inevitably caught on 'infectiously' very quickly.

## Concerns about the ecosystem

**Q.:** *You describe a 'bubble of excellence'. This transformation demonstrates the luxury a rich company can have in a country which is still developing, and where illiteracy persists. Bureaucratic administration appears to stop at the borders of OCP which appears today to be protected by the stature of its CEO. Finally, you did not talk about Islam which has a number of common values with modern management techniques, as Philippe d'Iribarne mentioned. Do these contradictions with your physical and social environment not run the risk of threatening the company's equilibrium in the long term?*

**H. E. H.:** The *niyya*, the Group's 'metavalue', according to which sincere intentions count more than results, comes from religion, and contains the right to make a mistake in modern management.

From an institutional point of view, even though our progress may rely on certain unique personalities within the Group, it is nonetheless incorporated with a view that it should be shared and open. Our CEO, who is a graduate of MIT and taught a class there on complex systems, is very enthusiastic about research, and puts emphasis on sharing knowledge. The 'Movement' satisfies his intellectual concerns. As far as the Group's wealth is concerned, it is of its own making, and is the result of its strategy and operational performance and not the value of its raw material, because the price of phosphate (like that of other raw materials) fluctuates. This year we will be the world's leading fertilizer producer with the most competitive production costs in the sector.

We are in close contact with local people and our ambition is to interact with our ecosystem by supporting its development and performance. From a social point of view, thanks to the OCP Foundation and the scholarships

that it offers, we have invested in the Mohammed VI Polytechnique University whose selection criteria are based on meritocracy. This university trains more executives for other Moroccan companies than for OCP. We have also developed a programme to strengthen skills and to increase fulfilment entitled 'OCP Skills' which for the most part is intended for young people near our sites. The top graduates of this programme receive a scholarship for two years, but which, once again, does not only benefit OCP. We recognise the expectations of people locally, and we try to do all we can to help to develop our country. OCP was, and remains, one of the main driving forces behind the Moroccan economy.

### Stimulus for a shared conscience

**Q.:** *In the beginning, liberating energies, paradoxically, consumes a great deal of resources. Therefore, this requires a degree of wealth. If the 'Situations' generated by the 'Movement' are insightful, could this be because of a shared corporate culture?*

**H. E. H.:** We invited Isaac Getz, one of the theorists who coined the term 'the liberated company', to one of our 'Situations'. I pointed out to him that we did not consider that the aim of the liberation of energies was to resolve a crisis – as it had done in the past in other companies which Getz cited – but to satisfy our desire to anticipate changes taking place in the environment by having recourse to our primary wealth, namely our human resources. The 'Situations' do not only supplement the Group's strategic curve, but also have an impact on the culture which accompanies strategic thinking.

The Group's collective conscience is in fact well established and shared. OCP is well aware of and cooperates in the problems relating to food safety on a global scale as well as in the development of its own country, Morocco. All the employees in the company know these objectives and share them. At OCP we do more than just earn a living.

### Feet firmly planted in the company's history

**Q.:** *OCP has always treated its employees with respect. I remember in the 1970s that it chartered an aeroplane so that retired French OCP employees could visit the important phosphate production site of Khouribga, and I can also cite the case of a site director who spent the entire day showing my sister and her husband around the site a few years ago. OCP has always shown remarkable openness with regard to its environment, and this openness is part of its history.*

**H. E. H.:** Thank you for your anecdote which confirms, once again, the Group's constant concern to focus on its human resources, and remains open about its environment. Let me tell you a short story which illustrates these two aspects. More than fifty years ago, the management model promoted by Bertrand Schwartz, one of the pioneers of continuous learning, represented a sort of breakthrough or 'disruption'. Three companies decided to implement this model: Lafarge, Peugeot and OCP. This new concept, which promoted an approach which was different to continuous training within the company, was an occasion for the Group to innovate and show boldness. The Group demonstrated its openness by organising seminars, training programmes for engineer-trainers, and unstructured interviews. Miners, trainers and executives all agreed to share their opinions and visions about the organisation of work and the means necessary to improve it by offering training programmes in a free, open and transparent way.

Years later, in 2006, Mostafa Terrab, was sufficiently concerned about the Group's history that he asked some historians to document it, and asked to meet Bertrand Schwartz. However, Schwartz was ill and so his son came instead, having briefed himself about his father's theories on companies, which strangely enough resemble what we say today happens in companies. He was able to see first-hand the considerable progress which we had made. This anecdote shows how we are linked to the past and to our history.

### Invisible technology

**Q.:** *The fourth phase in Deming's PDCA circle 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' was already a 'learning act'. The values you have presented have inspired similar processes in the automobile industry, and, for example, have resulted in the reduction*



of the number of hierarchical levels. This already showed that management was considered to be a technology, to coin the term used in the title of Michel Berry's book published in 1983 'Invisible technology', and was 'a decisive element of the structuring of reality'.

**H. E. H.:** The concepts of trust, openness, attentiveness, and pleasure were cited by employees during a work session about group intelligence when they were asked to describe their feelings at that particular time. The value system, or more precisely the behavioural system which personifies them, is constantly being revised throughout the company hierarchy, from the executives to the machine operators, and we are going to work on this with sociologists. As far as the desire to 'force' the organisation, as is the case when there are not enough executives, the CEO of OCP reacted differently. His vision can be summed up by a diagram which he drew in a meeting and which I will try to reproduce here. [Hicham El Habti draws a normal organigramme/hierarchy which, like all organigrammes/hierarchies, looks like a family tree]. Here is what we were [he draws what appears to be clouds] and here is what they should become [he draws wavy lines of air between the clouds]. One can see that all the 'Movement's mission statement is contained in these words and this drawing.

**Q.:** *How frightening!*

### Everyone can create value

**Q.:** *Many young Moroccans, having completed their studies in France, were recruited by OCP which also financed massive training programmes at the HEC Business School, the École Centrale Engineering School and MIT. I presume that OCP considered it was important if it was to succeed in its bid to transform the company to give all these young, educated and ambitious people something to dream about...*

**H. E. H.:** This was the subject of the first discussion I had with Mostafa Terrab. The 'Movement' is the perfect illustration of what you are describing. In this dynamic movement, all OCP employees are invited to put forward ideas about the future of the Group and to take part in its development. The Group created the framework and invested resources so that everybody can actively participate in the creation of value for the Group and for the country. Furthermore, we consider ourselves to be a talent factory from which all of Morocco and not just OCP will benefit.

### Poor, lonesome manager

**Q.:** *In the cartoon book 'The Singing Wire' by Morris and Goscinny, the main character, Lucky Luke, a cowboy known for his brevity, plays a role which is a little similar to yours. He resolves the dirty tricks of two rival teams who are fighting about a sum of money to be awarded for the construction of the first transcontinental telegraph wire in the United States. When he gets closer to the two teams, he forces them to respect certain values. Like you, Lucky Luke does not have a clearly defined job, and he talks even less than you do. Is silence the key to success?*

**H. E. H.:** When we launched the 'Movement' we decided to use a new form of communication which we called 'managerial communication'. Once the spirit of the 'Movement' was accepted and established, the participants were asked to comment about the 'Movement' in their local workplace. These pathfinders made it possible for the spirit and the principles of this dynamic process to be spread and shared. This required a change in the ways in which meetings were organised in order to give rise to productive discussions and conversations.

**Q.:** *Your message is nevertheless that of a representative of the CEO. Even though Lucky Luke does not talk, he is a fast shooter and even though he does not kill his enemies, he still disarms them. Your words can kill. I imagine that you talk tactfully so that you do not bully the people you are talking to.*

**H. E. H.:** That may appear to be the case, but as far as I am concerned I am in tune with the desire to liberate the incredible energy which exists in the Group. Today I am not 'the' spokesperson for the 'Movement' but rather one of its ambassadors who relays what we are experiencing within the company. I am not the only person to

have contributed to the spread of the ‘Movement’ within the Group. The *raison d’être* behind the ‘Movement’ was largely spread and shared by the employees at various forums where it was presented, and during discussions about its principles. Furthermore, managerial communication, which I just mentioned, played an important role in the spread and adoption of the ‘Movement’s’ message.

### Undoing habits in order to build trust...

*Q.: You are banking on trust, but is trust a feature of the company’s environment and the environment outside the company?*

**H. E. H.:** Trust cannot be ordered; it has to be acquired. Collective intelligence cannot be defined; it has to be experienced. Trust appeals to empathy, a term which we employ more and more ever since we launched the ‘Movement’, and it requires us to ‘reconnect’ with skills. We work a great deal on creating the conditions which are conducive to encouraging people to express their skills within the company. For us, ‘soft skills’ are essential. They include knowing how to be attentive to others, agreeing to question ourselves and our actions, using our emotional intelligence, developing different categories of leadership, and so on. These elements guarantee that collective intelligence works successfully.

### ... keep the boat afloat...

*Q.: How do you ensure the dynamic stability (despite the oxymoron) of the ‘Movement’ as well as the coherence of the teams which do not advance necessarily at the same speed?*

**H. E. H.:** We have to deal with these questions every day. The fact that we do not institutionalise the groups means that anyone who is enthusiastic and thinks that he can contribute to enhancing the ‘Situation’ can join a group, and anyone who thinks that he can no longer contribute can leave the group when he wants and come back when he wants. This self-regulation of a ‘Situation’ brings a dynamic stability to the ‘Movement’.

Furthermore, in order to make it fully possible for the ‘Situations’ to progress at a suitable pace, we have put in place an organisation which consists of three full-time employees whose job is to work with the ‘Situations’ and help them to carry out their job more easily. Also, I am beginning to be able to count on a relay of people at the production sites who are not hierarchically inferior to me, but who have volunteered to take part in this process. We have started to build a form of connected ‘community’ inspired by the principles of the ‘Movement’.

### ... and liberate one’s thoughts

*Q.: Is the creation of a collective conscience made up of multiple consciences and not one of the elements of the dynamic stability which you just mentioned? The ‘Movement’ is changing the company into a place where employees take time to think which, in fact, verges on the inconceivable, because we are so used to opposing thought and production. By liberating energies, you are also liberating thought from conventionalism and the technical world, and you hope to share this outside the company, which would explain your presence today at this seminar.*

**H. E. H.:** You are right. The introduction of a collective conscience made up of multiple consciences is one of the elements of this stability. As I mentioned earlier, we already had the seeds for this: all the OCP employees were aware of our corporate plans, notably to feed the world in a sustainable way, and to take part in the development of our country. The ‘Movement’ highlighted the fact that the company is increasingly conscious as a group about its complex environment and about its own complexity. Do not forget that the ambition shared by the CEO with the fifty employees present on April 4th, 2016 covered three directions: developing a global company, being a digital company, and motivating employees. Those present that day and those who joined the ‘Movement’ afterwards gave substance to these paths of growth by documenting strategic subjects. This is proof of the existence of a collective conscience within OCP.

As far as your remark concerning the habit of opposing thought with production, we are lucky to be able to grow in a group where this opposition does not exist. This is demonstrated by the company’s desire to put its three

directions - global development, digital development and enterprising employees - on the same level.

Furthermore, we want to share and have contact with the academic world. The École de Paris du management is today giving us a forum which allows us to give an account of our experience with words and ideas, and to benefit from outside opinions which may lead to a learning experience. OCP is more than a Moroccan company. It is the world's leading company in its sector, and intends to be a reference not only in phosphates and fertilizers, but also in management – a public example of the way in which one can develop the organisation of something which we do not, as yet, know.

*Q.: What you call a 'movement' is what we in physics refer to as a 'disturbance', the effect of which is to distance the organisation from its trajectory. However, in the end, would the system have been better if it had not been disturbed?*

**H. E. H.:** As I mentioned before, we have finalised the first phase of our industrial investment plan which allows us to become the leader in our sector. We have the most competitive production costs, and we are financially solid. We are well aware that we cannot be complacent about this head-start, and that we have to put the company in tune with its employees and the environment in which the company is changing while constantly growing and remaining true to its real potential. The relevance of the propositions which emerged from the initial 'Situations' as a result of the 'Movement' are the proof that we can determine a new trajectory which will move the group towards a future which is in keeping with its potential. This is the aim of our transformation: to state what eludes us and which will allow us to plot our future course.

■ Presentation of the speaker ■

**Hicham El Habti:** graduate of the École Polytechnique and the Ponts et Chaussées engineering school. He started his career at Ernst & Young. He joined the OCP Group in 2013, having been manager of Moroccan SMEs for seven years. OCP's general management appointed him to be in charge of the 'Movement'.

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