

Housing Association – Facilitated on-site change workshops

Client Objectives

Our client has recently become one of the UK's largest housing associations as a result of a merger between two existing organisations. The merging of these two well established housing associations has necessitated a large scale change programme, incorporating process, IT, people management, culture and team in order to create a new, streamlined and highly effective service delivery organisation.

Our client recognised that organisational culture and team behaviour are fundamental in either hindering or helping the change process. maia were asked to design and deliver facilitated change workshops aimed at tackling cultural issues arising between the two merging organisations, to address resistance to / suspicion of change amongst the teams.

maia's approach

In order to have the biggest impact in the shortest space of time, all staff within the organisation were invited to attend one of a series of change workshops to address cultural differences and resistance to change. People are at the core of any change process, heavily influencing the difference between success and failure. The purpose of the change workshops was to bring people on board with the change program and the goals/objectives behind the change program, thereby lowering their resistance to change, increasing their buy in and enhancing the likely success of the organisational merger.

maia utilised a widely recognised change management tool, which required staff to take some time to read the chosen material prior to the workshops. However, the advantage of using such a program was that it de-personalised attitudes to change, so that staff could focus on the characters in the book, rather than themselves and their own personal situation. In addition, it also gave the groups a common language for change, leading to a more constructive and less emotional discussion.

The workshops included the following key elements:

- Education about the need for change within the business
- Communication about the change process

- Participation and involvement – an opportunity for all delegates to express their views and to feel part of the change process
- Facilitation by an external consultant, ensuring that the agenda was adhered to, discussions were constructive and inclusive and emotionally charged subject matter was approached objectively

maia designed and delivered these workshops within a two week timeframe, to include a maximum of 12 delegates, with a 1 day managers workshop and ½ day staff workshops.

The results

maia successfully delivered the 1 day managers workshop within the timeframe required. The 1 day managers event allowed managers 'time out' from the business to explore their own and their teams' attitudes to change in a facilitated environment.

This resulted in delegates being able to:

- Analyse their own behaviours and reactions to change
- Understand their colleagues' approach to change and how it differs from their own
- Identify the likely source of behaviours displayed by their team members
- Appreciate the support required by their teams and colleagues throughout the change process
- Recognise people's mindset and attitudes to change and understand how to influence this
- Realise the possible benefits of change
- Participate in an open forum, to identify all sources of discomfort with the change process and provide answers to as many questions as possible

This workshop not only allowed managers to understand and acknowledge their own fears and concerns regarding the change program and likely impact on their jobs, it also allowed the stakeholders commissioning the workshop to appreciate their own and their teams' attitude to change and therefore be more empathetic about the concerns that any change process induces.

The rollout of the staff workshops is currently underway.

If you would like to talk to us about how we can help your business, we would love to hear from you. You can contact us on contactus@maigroup.co.uk, telephone us on 0870 7744220, or visit our website at www.maiagroup.co.uk