



Background

Our client is a major service provider and a leading distributor of interior and exterior building products specialising in energy management.

The client is implementing an organisation wide change management project spearheaded by the introduction of a new ERP system that will underpin a fundamental shift in the established ways of working. The Project Director has recruited the team and guided the project to focus on the business benefits and the application of change into business practices supported by the new system.

The project team are multi skilled, talented and include very experienced people with a range of skills from within the business and from more traditional IT roles. The Project Director was concerned that whilst the team had the project management and technical skills to accomplish the task they lacked the soft skills to win the hearts and minds of the field based business people that these changes would directly affect.

Change Management project failures rarely focus on the technical implementation. More often than not they hinge on the ability of the Change Agents to convince the organisation that their views would be taken into account and they would be involved, consulted and included in any changes affecting them. The ability of the project team to get people onside was identified as crucial to the implementation.

Consulting Assignment

With that need in mind, the client asked us to design and deliver a programme of training and development that would give the team the soft skills required to effectively involve the staff and business so that they felt and could see they were part of the success of the change programme.

In doing that they could create a new culture and internal brand that would permeate the business so that the diverse departments would work better together globally.

With that ethos of buy-in and co-operation established, the team needed to help the business measure and realise the benefits of the changes and to identify and drive through where the biggest impact would occur. Once initial successes had occurred they would then be able to use the benefits realisation to spur other elements of the project to achieve similar savings by using the lessons learnt in previous implementations.

The Analysis

Prior to designing the programme the team met with the lead consultant to benchmark the project and to establish the detail behind major issues and challenges. Through a wider understanding of the history and current status the training content was created and tailored so that it met the exact needs of the organisation and the individuals in the project team.

During the interviews and focus groups, assessments were made of the related communication styles, skills gaps and current perceptions of the project and how that mapped to individual needs and their learning styles.

The Solution

The project team attended a series of workshops designed to solve the issues raised in the research. As the primary objectives centred on the ability of the team to interact more effectively with their internal customers the programme made extensive use of Discovery Insights.

Insights gives individuals the ability to understand themselves better and in doing so helps them understand others so they can adapt presentations and communication to be much more understandable and acceptable by their colleagues . In these type of projects where change, communication and shared understanding are so crucial, Insights gives everyone a common language so challenging situations can be discussed more easily and solutions to previously difficult problems found.

The workshops covered the following subjects:

- Change Management
- Benefits Realisation
- Project Management
- Facilitation Skills
- Communication and Influencing Skills (Discovery Insights)

The Implementation

All the modules were designed and tailored by the lead consultant who, with the assistance of the Project Director, ensured that the messages and learning could be directly applied to the project and could be used straight away.

As a result project meetings with the business and customers were used as case studies and role plays so that the communication and content could be tailored for maximum effect and would enhance the skills transfer process.

Areas of Development	Benefit
Change Management	To provide the Project Team with a greater understanding of the soft skills required to engage the staff in the new ways of working. Selling the benefits and having a greater appreciation of the impact change has on staff and where they sit on the change curve and how they could create interventions to solve issues, create solutions and generally bring out people's ideas.
Benefits Realisation (BRM)	To measure where the impact of the change project has had on the business and the biggest shift. How to set a baseline and then to set out where the project is going so you know when you have reached it. BRM enables benefits to be at the heart of everything so changes aren't made of the sake of it and positively impact the business
Project Management Skills	To provide the Project Team with a uniformed approach to project management with introduction of bespoke forms and tools to support them.
Facilitation Skills	Offering the Project Team a structured approach to facilitate project meetings with staff to ensure meeting objectives are met.
Communication and Influencing skills (Insights Discovery)	To offer the Project Team a model of communication to engage with staff and stake holders. Including how they communicate and how to adapt their communication to win the hearts and minds of disengaged and demotivated staff whilst keeping the positive players onside during the entire project

Project Director Feedback

Winning the hearts and minds of the field staff was critical to the success of this project. I felt the team at Rhodes quickly understood what was needed to ensure the Project Team had the right skills to engage the business. My team are very experienced with some highly qualified staff this development had to be relevant and targeted to ensure their engagement. The consultants Rhodes appointed were very experienced and their pre-course work with my team ensured the development was relevant. I attended the 1 day Change Management day and I found the blend of Insights and Change Managements skills an extremely valuable experience.

Since the development we have definitely seen a higher level of quality participation and communication with the business.