



Learning Accelerants

One of the biggest challenges that organisations face is how learning and development can be translated into tangible and rapid performance improvements quickly.

Whilst workshops, projects and action learning are clearly critically important to the development of people, it is also important to compliment these traditional methods with interventions that act as “learning accelerants” to rapidly embed skills, behaviours and step change performance.

Healthskills have developed 3 such learning accelerants to compliment our Team, Board and Leadership development programmes.

Leadership Development Centres

We take a leadership group away for one day and pose 2 particular challenges:

- 1 A business simulation exercise where working in two groups we ask them to run a business. Introducing time pressured market challenges plus the need for excellent organisation, structure and strategy the groups are observed in the direction they take and the progress they make.
- 2 An authentic and bespoke NHS organisational challenge. The type of challenge is derived from pressing real-life organisational needs. An example of which is the work we are currently doing with an Ambulance Trust with a remit to facilitate the rapid development of their Assistant Directors (ADs). The brief was to develop something that made them alter the view that they had of their world in as authentic a way as possible. In short we wanted them to perform as different people within their own organisation. So we created a challenge for them to engage with using a “leadership relay” so no-one quite knows who will get the baton at different times; all are therefore engaged and engrossed. Picture the scene; there has been an outbreak of Norovirus and the system is in chaos. “Meat and drink” you would think to an Ambulance Trust but in this scenario the whole Executive team are off site and the ADs are now running the place and suddenly they are really running the organisation as the entire Executive team is hospitalised. The team are now engrossed in sorting out who is doing what and when; emergency scenario plans are being invoked at pace when suddenly they are summoned to the control room to watch a breaking “Health News” story. The whole system is in chaos it proclaims; a local celebrity has contacted them as she cannot raise an ambulance to a sick child. Health News want an interview and “need to know what’s going on” but the new management team haven’t the time for this until one member of the team suggests it maybe an opportunity for them to reassure people during the interview and to get a professional message across. A truly amazing moment as the Health News interview takes place and a leader’s outlook is changed forever.



“Health News” video still



Leadership in Action Challenges

Embedded within our leadership development programmes are our one day challenges developed to stretch and invigorate the participants. Based on real-life type tasks, delegates form teams, develop strategy and recommend solutions to an invited Board room panel. Examples of such challenges include:

- 1 Acting as internal consultants assessing the readiness for change of 2 departments within an Acute Trust;
- 2 Requesting that teams assess the present and future market viability of a department within a hospital and then re-brand and market that department;
- 3 The recommended re-design of the distributions teams within an Ambulance Trust utilising the application of LEAN thinking.

An Organisational RAID

Healthskills have developed strong organisational links with high performing commercial organisations that open their doors to our clients in order to foster an environment of learning and proactive appreciative inquiry to facilitate that inquiry.

Teams are invited into our partner organisations, such as Siemens and Balfour Beatty Workplace, to discuss issues within large and small team environments plus one to one interviews. A recent RAID brief is as follows:

The primary objective for the Raid is to learn as much as possible from a high performance culture. The two significant lines of inquiry are:

- How does the organisation obsessively identify and multiply high performing talent within that culture;
- How does the organisation maintain the right balance between market making and disciplined high performance execution within that culture? In other words how does it balance the need to look to the future whilst performing in the present?

You will be expected to feedback your findings to the host organisation at the end of the RAID and then consider and reflect in more detail and develop a short, medium and longer term plan that will assimilate your learning back into your organisation that you will present to your Executive Team.

We would like you to consider the above from an appreciative inquiry point of view. We have included supporting material in relation to appreciative inquiry.

If you would like to find out more about our Learning Accelerants and how their use could help your organisation or team improve capability to tackle unprecedented challenges ahead, please contact Paul King on 07971 008 683 or paul.king@healthskills.co.uk.