

Successfully integrating new teams at a time of rapid growth

Leadership consultancy in a not-for-profit organisation

Background

At first glance, this not-for-profit organisation, operating in the substance misuse sector, was a huge success.

Headed by a dynamic, innovative Director, who puts user-involvement at the heart of the Organisation's ethos and operations, they were going from strength to strength.

In just three years, they had:

- won three major service delivery tenders, due to their excellent work
- merged with two other providers
- won a consortium service contract with two other providers
- increased their national contributions to other substance misuse projects.

However, as their forward-thinking Director and their Senior Management Team know, rapid change can bring its own challenges and cause an organisation to crack. They wanted to avoid that, so invited Emma to work with them to forge an even stronger team, fully integrating the new providers.

Key Issues

As a result of its expansion and successful tendering, the Organisation had several key challenges. These were:

- inheriting teams that are used to a different culture and way of working
- working with two other service providers to deliver a service, which spanned a large and rural area of the UK
- integrating 60 staff from three different incumbent providers for this new contract, who were transferred (under TUPE) over.

"Trying to get staff to work to their new job descriptions, rather than their old ones, was a real challenge".

Service Manager

As a result of this transfer, there were some issues, resulting from a significant number of people not being happy with a new model of working. Among them:

- some staff were overtly and covertly resistant
- staff sickness levels increased
- there were increased incidents of bullying
- there was a sometimes hostile and passive-aggressive attitude towards management.

"This has been a challenging and difficult process for all involved."

Regional Director

Overall, at a time when the Organisation should have been celebrating its success and increased ability to positively impact society, it was, instead, turning on itself.

Solution

Emma started by listening to all the managers and the workers involved in the TUPE. She did this through one-to-one coaching, small group sessions and large group sessions.

As one of the Organisation's Directors explained about the process Emma applied: "Emma held an extraordinary meeting with one of our teams, where bullying and isolation was apparent. As a result, she became a voice for people who have felt unheard."

"Emma quickly got to grips with the issues faced by both staff subject to the TUPE process and the new management team."

Regional Director

Once the main issues were identified, Emma worked to support **all** the individuals in the team. Together, she helped them make the changes needed, whether that was a change in attitude, a move towards acceptance, greater self-confidence, taking responsibility or above all, respecting and valuing others in both the words and actions used.

One of the Organisation's Regional Directors observed that: "Emma quickly got to grips with the issues faced both by the staff subject to the TUPE process and the new management team.

"She then facilitated development sessions to draw out the issues, addressing them systematically and assisting staff in settling down into the new working practices and processes".

The development sessions that Emma ran were value-based work, to support the Organisation's new culture. All of these sessions were supported through one-to-one coaching reaching right from the Director all the way to front line staff.

One of the Service Managers reflected how, "Emma has mediated between staff and line managers where there have been problems.

"Also, through one-to-one coaching, she has helped me trouble shoot and problem solve the day-to-day difficulties widescale organisational change can bring."

Results

The results of Emma's work can be seen throughout this extraordinary organisation.

Emma has helped Directors learn how to manage and develop demotivated and resistant staff. She has helped individuals learn how to deal with change positively. She has helped the organisation live and breathe their values internally so they are more able to live them with their clients.

As a result of her work, Emma has allowed the Directors to be able to focus on dealing with delivering their essential, life-transforming service, with a positive team behind them who are raring to go.

"Emma has been invaluable in this time of change for our organisation."

Regional Director

One of the Organisation's Service Managers, reflected that: "Emma has been instrumental in helping me, and my colleagues in the management team, manage and move staff forward from being resistant, unhelpfully challenging and de-motivated to being engaged and positive. She has excited and motivated staff and teams who were struggling with the change."

A Regional Director observed that: "Emma has been invaluable in this time of change for our organisation. She has a calm and fair approach. She is empathic with the needs of individuals while understanding the wider strategic picture.

"I could not recommend a better person to support organisations with difficult staff and changing culture, behaviours and attitude".

Conclusion

This was a successful organisation that was about to implode because of its own success. Emma calmly, objectively and with great care, helped the people of this Organisation come together, so they could achieve their goals and help some of our society's most desperate people.

As one of the Service managers concluded: "Emma continues to work with us to help us reach our goals in several different forums. She still provides one to one coaching sessions. She provides group reflective practice sessions for managers and for front line staff together, where we are encouraged to be open and honest and develop."

"Emma always finds the perfect balance between challenge and empathy and is well respected within our service."

The Organisation's details have been kept deliberately vague to protect client anonymity.