Case Study – Team Development

Situation

Information Solutions (IS) is a team of 30 people responsible within NATS (see Background) for the provision of general desktop IT services, including a significant SAP environment. It is a relatively new group comprising individuals from its predecessor organisation and new external recruits. Services are delivered both directly and through outsourced service suppliers.

The overall goal was to create an ongoing development programme that would improve team effectiveness and so increase internal customer satisfaction. To maintain service levels only 12 of the team could be released at any one time.

Initial development objectives included:

▸ Developing the capabilities to create clear requirements (or objectives)

▸ Building influencing and persuading skills

▸ Enhancing team relationships

▸ Having some fun

Approach

To maintain service levels people were released in stages to attend one of three workshops. The workshops were off site and lasted a day and half, including an overnight stay to enable people to get to know each other in a relaxed environment.

The workshops were designed to:

▸ Enable people to learn by doing. A series of proven, high impact projects were used to challenge thinking and enable the practical application of techniques learnt. Although not physically demanding, the exercises required teams to work creatively on tasks both inside and outdoors (always popular after the night before)

▸ Emphasise effective behaviours. The event encouraged people to identify the behaviours that are effective for their role – what works and what doesn't

▸ Concentrate on the immediate application of learning – how each individual can apply the learning to their situation at work

▸ Allow the management team to actively participate, by providing support and challenge to the participants

▸ Have pace and energy to maintain interest and appeal to a range of learning styles

Our intention is to create a non-threatening environment where people feel comfortable exploring new ways of working.
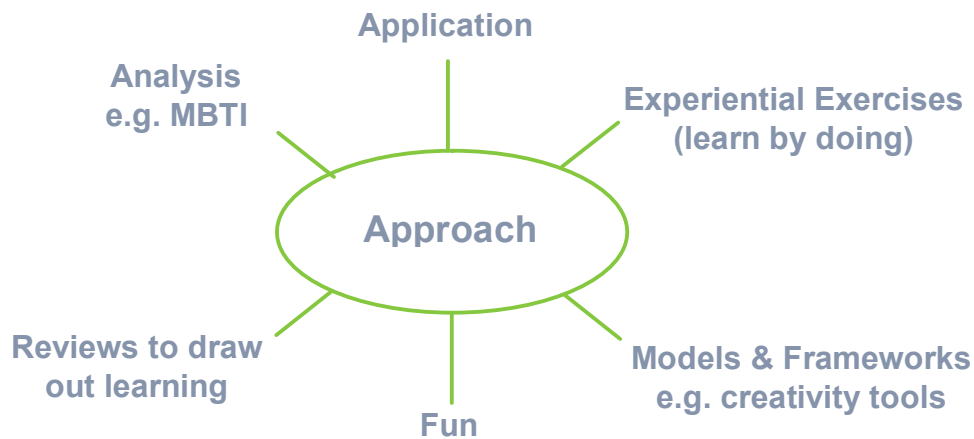
Tangible Outcomes

The management team decided from the start that they would conduct a formal review of the programme outcomes a few months after its completion. We always encourage our clients to identify clear objectives at the outset together with a practical means of evaluation to ensure that the return on the investment can be measured. In this case the review identified:

▸ Increased use of "pull" style enquiry by the team to clarify customer objectives and requirements, and greater questioning to identify ways of removing barriers to achievement of objectives

▸ An increase in customer satisfaction to from 85% to 91%.

The team enjoyed the experience and there was an appetite for further development, particularly in the areas of innovative problem solving and cross team working. SCIOS subsequently developed and delivered a follow-on programme to address this.

Overall, the development programme achieved its objectives and the request to deliver further programmes is evidence that the approach achieved tangible benefits.

You can read more about our approach to team development on the Services pages of this site.

Background

NATS provides air traffic control services to aircraft flying in UK airspace, and over the eastern part of the North Atlantic. This year the company will handle more than 2.4 million flights carrying over 220 million passengers. It has approximately 5000 staff and a turnover of £701m.

Should you wish to speak to any of our clients for the purposes of understanding more about the benefits of our approach we would be happy to arrange it.

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