

Team Development Session Government Legal Services Team, UK

Business Challenges

The work of the legal team had been particularly high, in both amount and complexity, for the last 18 months, due to legislative changes. During this period the team performed well and worked together with a good team spirit. Their team leader, recognised this, but also recognised that the pressure on the team was set to increase rather than abate over the coming year. She wanted the team to go from good to great, working as a collective to deliver optimum results.

One barrier to optimum team working was a lack of understanding or appreciation of different ways of working and communicating. This was preventing them from sharing tacit knowledge, working efficiently together and accessing the skills and talents of the whole team.

The team leader wanted to take a positive approach to building insights into human behaviour and different preferences so the team could understand and trust themselves and each other better. The session also needed to be a positive event, a celebration of the team's recent achievements and work within a tightly allocated budget.

Required Outcomes

Aim: To take stock, prepare, and build the team, ready for the challenges of the next 12 months

Outcomes:

- Celebrate and review team performance and working practices to further increase our effectiveness
- To understand our different working styles and how they impact on working relationships, motivations and behaviours
- To understand how our thinking impacts on our actions and results
- To increase our psychological flexibility in challenging situations, building personal and team resilience

Our Solution and Approach

The team reviewed their ways of working, focusing on what had worked, what hadn't and why. From here the team analysed different behaviours and motivations using the transactional analysis based Drivers & Working Styles questionnaire (Hay).

Individual results were shared, particularly between lawyers whose styles were very different, providing a language for exploring personal preferences. A team analysis was also undertaken by pulling together the individual responses and identifying common themes. The team then considered their strengths, weaknesses and responses under pressure and action planned for increased effectiveness.

Finally, the team determined how thinking impacts on results using the ABC method (Activating Situation – Beliefs – Consequences). The team identified their triggers in a pressurised work environment and their default responses. Methods for psychological flexibility – allowing more helpful responses than your default response – were then considered with individual action planning for their application.

Results

The following outputs and outcomes were achieved:

- A much greater understanding of what motivates and drives individual team members, allowing the team leader and team members to get the best from each other in everyday interactions
- Action plans, personal and team, capturing how to understand and respond to the different working styles, including practical behaviour adaptations that have improved team relationships and collaborative working
- An approach that they can use to understand and adapt their natural psychological responses under pressure with action points for increased effectiveness and team support under pressure

Client Feedback

“I just wanted to say again how grateful I was to you for such an informative and fun development event. I think it was a real success on all fronts. Even more so for me because there are some practical actions for me to take away and implement to further improve team performance.”

It was quite a big ask, to get a bunch of serious, task oriented lawyers like us to think a bit differently, but you did so with real expertise. I think this will make a difference to how effectively and positively we approach the challenges of 2016.”

Team Leader/Senior Lawyer



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