

Change, motivation and people development at Lloyds TSB

leadership

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An acclaimed leadership development programme led by a Campion Willcocks Associate empowered senior managers in Lloyds TSB Group Operations, resulting in increased motivation, higher productivity and improved service.

“Participants said it was their best development experience in many years’ service, and executives in Group Operations said the programme was among its key achievements for the year,” says Cathie Woodward, the specialist who ran the programme. “The people aspects of change can be critical to success, with research indicating that a focus on developing people can have a major impact on the bottom line,” explains Russell Saunders, Payments Director, Lloyds TSB. “We took advantage of the opportunity presented by organisational changes to motivate our back-office teams, so meeting calls for greater efficiency and improved service.”

The challenges of change

Lloyds TSB Group Operations provides essential back-office processing functions for the bank’s customer-facing units. Many services are provided via specialist groups in locations that include Birmingham, Andover and Brighton; these multi-functional centres must handle high volumes of transactions quickly and accurately to support payments, account management, and so on.

During one of the regular conversations between the Lloyds TSB Director of Group Operations and David Birnie, Campion Willcocks Director, it emerged that many middle and senior managers in the centres had moved from branches as part of a reorganisation that included process improvements and new technology. Some felt they had moved from being a ‘big fish in a small pond’ to a ‘small fish in a big pond’. They tended to be long-serving employees and, with little earnings differential with their younger peers, there was a risk of uninvolved and poorly motivated management developing, with knock-on effects in productivity and service. In fact, a study by external consultants had already

identified a perception among employees of some managers as being passive or aggressive rather than constructive.

To complicate the situation, Lloyds TSB felt that a high profile culture-change programme might be met with cynicism and would risk being swamped by the other change initiatives under way. It was felt that any such programme should be constructive rather than remedial: coaching for excellence, helping drive change within all groups of employees, whether disaffected or not. Taking these factors into account, it was clear the assignment required a unique individual.

The right match

“We identified Cathie Woodward as having the right qualifications and experience to deliver a programme that was both low-key and highly effective,” says David Birnie. “With a Degree in Behavioural Coaching and a Master’s in Psychology, she is a professional coach and leadership developer – and had also previously worked with financial services.” Under the aegis of Russell Saunders, Payments Director, Neal Lucas, Head of Account Management and Roger Nichols, Head of HR, she designed and delivered a customised programme that was far beyond the standard ‘packaged’ approach offered by HR consultants – and one that far exceeded Lloyds TSB’s expectations.

The programme

“The programme worked directly with the target management,” says Woodward. “A diagnostic phase involved meeting participants and having them complete questionnaires, to explore their understanding and experience of leadership development.” Six group-based classroom sessions covered issues such as leadership style and obstacles, followed by 12 one-hour one-to-one coaching sessions. “I focused on individual needs, personalising the sessions and building them around each participant,” adds Woodward.

Her approach was founded on 'ruthless compassion', a technique based on respect and value for each participant. However, it also requires having 'difficult' conversations to help participants to grow and take on new behaviours and attitudes. "This facilitates people in transforming their working practices beyond their normal boundaries, helping individuals, teams and organisations to achieve objectives beyond normal organisational change," explains Woodward. "It helps people shed their limiting beliefs and creates emotional leadership. Of course, all information was treated with the utmost confidentiality." Woodward made it clear that coaching sessions were about the individual, but with organisational needs forming part of the equation. "I gave people authentic and respectful feedback, and helped them find ways to develop relationships and skills so they and their teams could grow. I didn't allow trivialisation and because people knew I started from a position where they were valued they felt they could share anything. They left each session feeling good – and with behaviours to practice!"

The results: magic dust

In a short space of time, the buzz in Group Operations was that this programme was different – and rather special. Most importantly, the behaviours and attitudes of participants changed dramatically, creating a far more positive environment, increasing motivation and improving service. Woodward ran two further programmes with equal success. Indeed, by coaching 40 managers, the behaviours of around 2,000 front-line staff were influenced.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Comments included "This was my most empowering experience in 20 years", "I'm now able to confront things and accept new ideas", "I've regained my confidence", "I have a reawakened interest in my job" and "My team now know the real me". Moreover, 'goldfish bowl' sessions that included senior executives saw participants talk openly about their experiences. It was during one such session that the programme was likened to sprinkling 'magic dust' over the managers. Woodward continued her association, working with Lloyds TSB University to create a version of the programme for a far wider audience, moving the coaching up the management hierarchy and becoming a personal coach to several senior executives.

According to David Birnie, "The people aspects of change are vital to achieving the benefits of change in general. Indeed, enhancing leadership skills can improve productivity and service irrespective of any system or process changes."

"This was an excellent programme in that it enabled us to motivate our managers and so improve productivity and service levels," adds Russell Saunders, Payments Director. "It was made possible by Campion Willcocks' ability to understand our needs, and then provide precisely the right person to meet those needs."

About Lloyds TSB Group

Lloyds TSB is a leading UK-based financial services group. At the end of 2002 group assets totalled £253 billion, it had over 79,000 employees, and market capitalisation was £24.8 billion. Its main businesses and activities comprise: UK Retail Banking and Mortgages; Insurance and Investments; Wholesale Markets; and International Banking.

About Campion Willcocks

Providing dedicated resources since 1968, Campion Willcocks & Associates Ltd helps major organisations meet the challenges of change by providing project, programme and change management professionals on an interim and contract basis. It achieves a 99.3% success rate in matching professionals with assignments.

magic dust

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