

## Case Study // 'Putting Strengths to Work': Strengths-based Organisation Development

### The Challenge

The client organisation was a major skills and careers agency with over 1,000 staff. Market research on the needs of their client group and target audiences identified 'Putting Strengths to Work' as the key theme in relation to their client population's skills and careers. The client organisation sought to deliver this objective first by building an internal strengths practice, capability and culture that would support their external customer delivery. This strengths-based organisation development project was put out to competitive tender, with Capp the successful bidder. The aim of the project was to harness individual and team strengths in order to improve performance and performance conversations across the organisation.

### Capp's Approach

The project began with the question of how to develop a strengths-based organisation most effectively across the 1,400 employees of the organisation, while operating within the constraints of budget, time and resource.

Capp developed a range of strengths-based organisation development options, and then worked with an internal project team to establish which of the options would be most viable across a range of important business parameters.

Based on this project design, five intervention approaches were delivered:

- Development of internal capability through train-the-trainer programmes and Strengths Practitioner accreditation for internal strengths coaches
- All employees completed Realise2, Capp's online strengths assessment and development tool, and had the opportunity to participate in an individual or group debrief
- Strengths-based team development for the leadership team and the functional management teams, covering c. 200 of the most senior people in the organisation
- Two-hour strengths workshops being delivered to all frontline staff by the internal strengths coaches
- The strengths approach being woven into the performance management and review process, so that strengths conversations became the norm for people management across the organisation.

All of these interventions were designed to build people's understanding and capability of using their own strengths at work, and using strengths approaches in people management across the organisation, as a platform for further use.

The Head of OD for the client organisation said, *"The introduction of the Strengths programme and vocabulary has provided a great foundation to ensure the Strengths approach becomes an integral part of our planning and performance discussions. In recognising our strengths, we now have a key insight into how we can work better as individuals and as teams, and can use this in our day to day roles to help us achieve our personal and organisational goals. Ongoing feedback has been extremely positive, with colleagues feeling that it was relevant to their work and will be something they action and continue to build on after the workshops."*

## Results

Highlights of the project delivery include:

- 19 internal staff trained as certified Realise2 strengths coaches
- 45 two-hour strengths workshops delivered by internal strengths coaches
- 110 Realise2 debriefs delivered to Team Leaders by internal strengths coaches
- 26 teams attended a facilitated Realise2 team strengths development session
- Individual and manager toolkits used to embed ongoing learning and practice.

Evaluation of the strengths-based team development workshops showed consistent positive scores of "agree" or "strongly agree" (average score on a 1-7 scale):

- I believe I have a responsibility to identify and develop strengths in others (6.38)
- I found the strengths workshop relevant to my work (6.19)
- I intend to continue to build on my learning from the workshop (6.10)
- I will take action as a result of the strengths workshop (6.09).

The strengths-based organisation development programme for the organisation delivered a number of outcomes:

- Development of a shared strengths philosophy and language that is being used across the organisation
- Enhanced team working through identification of the key strengths of individuals and that exist across teams, enabling people to work together more effectively to achieve their goals and objectives
- Powerful individual- and team-level data that supports live and ongoing performance conversations to achieve corporate objectives
- A shift in culture so that the organisation as a whole was more focused on using strengths to deliver performance and so deliver against the core organisational purpose of 'Putting Strengths to Work'.