

Case Study // Birmingham City Council - Building Internal Change Capability



Birmingham City Council (BCC) is the largest council in Europe, serving more than 1 million residents. Holding four Beacon awards for innovative service provision, BCC is known as a forward looking local authority and was the Personnel Today Awards Employer of the Year 2010.

The Challenge

In response to the need for greater efficiency, Birmingham City Council sought innovative ways to 'do more with less'. The key challenges they faced were:

- The organisation needed to become more agile, with employees being willing and able to work in different roles and functions
- Business transformation initiatives previously run by external consultants needed to be run by internal employees.

In response to these challenges, the Birmingham City Council In Source team was established to recruit and manage a pool of internal consultants as Change Agents. These consultants worked on short term internal consultancy assignments enabling change throughout the organisation.

Capp's Approach

Capp were commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the Change Agent programme in March 2009. Capp then supported the In Source team to recruit and induct further Change Agents, and to develop their internal consultancy capability, through:

- The evaluation of the Change Agent programme, using interviews, quantitative surveys and focus groups with Change Agents and managers
- Analysis of the data and recommendations for short, medium and long term interventions to deliver success for the In Source team in alignment with the BCC strategy
- Identifying the strengths required to be a successful Change Agent - to form the basis of future recruitment and development
- Designing strengths-based interviews and co-designing and delivering a strengths-based assessment centre for the recruitment of further Change Agents
- The provision of strengths awareness sessions for all Change Agents as part of their induction programme.

: Tarik Chawdry,
 : Assistant HR Director,
 : Birmingham City
 : Council, said, "Capp
 : helped us turn
 : a concept into a
 : practical solution
 : using their strengths-
 : based approach - this
 : made the Change
 : Agent team more
 : motivated, ethical
 : and effective,
 : enabling them
 : to deliver the
 : internal consultancy
 : and business
 : transformation that
 : the Council needed."

Results

Evaluation of the project, despite the challenging circumstances in which it was being delivered, showed that:

- The In Source team recruited 15 high calibre Change Agents from over 70 people who applied, and expanded the scale of the business transformation assignments they were delivering within the Council
- The Change Agent team has subsequently expanded further to include 40 high calibre Change Agents
- The strengths-based assessment process clearly identified the key strengths of candidates, and whether they would be suited to the role of a Change Agent
- The Change Agent project was the winner of the Personnel Today Gold Award for 2010, as well as a finalist for the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Change Management Award 2010.
- Birmingham City Council were named as the Personnel Today Awards Employer of the Year 2010, in recognition of the work they had done to engage and manage staff through this significant transition, including the use of internal business transformation support from the In Source team.