

Harnessing the Power of Inclusion

Objectives

BP commissioned Steps to create an innovative and immersive launch event for their Diversity Awareness Week. This initiative was the first of its kind, aimed at engaging 1000 BP employees with the work the company is doing in Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) as well as challenging assumptions and biases and their impact on working culture. BP also wanted to raise awareness of the affinity groups and support networks on offer for individuals in their employment.

Solution

We worked with BP to develop a shared vision and bring our innovative ideas to life. We wanted to highlight the individual's responsibility for creating an inclusive environment at BP. It was important to focus on the 'grey' areas of D&I – i.e. learning preferences, unconscious biases, micro-messages and encourage exploration of these in an engaging way. Using this brief we designed and delivered a number of intensive, open workshops that focussed on '*Creating inclusive, effective meetings*' and '*D&I – What's it got to do with me?*'.

BP wanted to challenge mindsets and transform attitudes. We needed to position diversity in a wider context and help employees understand their role in delivering an inclusive culture at BP. We needed to focus on the individual – promoting participation, encouraging accountability and creating a space to explore perceptions and attitudes around diversity. 'From the word go I felt that Steps understood what we needed and I really liked the sense of team spirit – it felt like a true partnership' said Paula Rochford, Learning & Development, North Sea Region BP.

For the launch we created a "Power of Inclusion Journey" – a walk-through-space where people could experience what D&I means in an engaging and provocative way. Working with event experts Blue Hat UK, we built a creative installation that included a number of different and fun activities, appealing to employees' different learning styles. We displayed statistical D&I facts and extracts from interviews we conducted with BP employees in written format, created a bespoke game that played on people's biases in a non-challenging and interactive way and delivered a number of dramatic scenarios that drew on some of the experiences typical in the BP office. We also had a 'Vox Pop wall' where we showed a video of 'talking heads' with Steps actors expressing the experience of BP employees based outside the UK and a 'visual soundscape' video where one could read and listen to verbatim quotes from interviews we conducted with BP employees.

Using 'immersive techniques' such as these allowed us to engage large numbers of people in a short space of time and delivered a 'holistic' learning experience that played on the senses and drew an emotional response. Paula Rochford commented 'I was worried about our short timescales, but Steps gave me confidence from the beginning that it could happen and that it would be a success - which it was. It was a pleasure to work on this project'.

Outcomes

We had resoundingly positive feedback. A digital wall and pad allowed employees to draw, scribble or write their thoughts about the event and about the wider D & I commitment at BP. These reactions were then displayed in video format on a screen in the Atrium throughout the rest of the Diversity Awareness Week.

Jim Cowie, Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee at BP commented: "It is evident that the success of this event was only made possible by the energy and expertise that the team brought to making it happen.

It has been particularly heartening to hear all the positive comments that people had about their attendance and participation. Employees commented on the difference in style at the various booths, how they enjoyed interacting with the Steps actors and how uplifting it was to hear the positive messages that employees shared about working for BP and who has inspired them."