

Championing a culture of respect

A scalable, blended media solution - engaging over 65,000 employees in the drive to create a culture of inclusivity and respect

Objective

In order to promote a culture of respect at work and counteract issues of bullying and harassment, the Co-Operative Group approached Steps to deliver face to face workshops for 140 senior managers, and a scalable, blended media solution to engage all 65,000 employees in the drive to create a culture of inclusivity and respect.

Approach

Our key challenges were the breadth and diversity of the organisation in terms of function (retail, funeral care, travel, pharmacy, logistics) and geography - as well as the need to engage managers and staff on a difficult and sensitive subject.

We designed a half-day drama-based training workshop which was tailored for the different Co-op businesses, which include department stores, food stores, funeral branches, travel agents and pharmacies.

Through interactive drama, managers were able to recognise the impact of behaviours and reflect on 'real' issues within the organisation without ever feeling exposed or preached to. Managers engaged in an honest and robust debate about how to address and challenge inappropriate behaviours. Via dramatic scenarios, discussion groups, and action planning the managers and leaders, as culture carriers, were encouraged to take responsibility and commit to role-modelling respect and dignity in the workplace.

To carry the respect message to 65,000 employees throughout the organisation, the Co-operative also commissioned Steps to write, shoot, edit and produce a short film. Scenarios on the DVD covered issues of respect in various environments including office, retail and warehouse. The DVD scenarios were used as a key part of Respect Works training sessions delivered internally throughout the Group.

Outcomes/Evaluation

Delegates committed to specific action plans from each session, and Senior Leaders were also asked to commit their support for achieving a culture of respect in the workplace. The visibility of support from senior levels has allowed the Co-operative Group to make positive gains in addressing issues of bullying, harassment and respect.

"Steps has knowledge and experience of diversity and respect, gained from working with other organisations. They took time to understand us and our issues. They created a very thought-provoking workshop which brought life to a range of themes relating to respect at work. We valued their flexibility, adaptability and pragmatism." Amanda Jones, Head of Diversity

Further to the success of this programme, we then worked closely with the Co-operative to develop a Championship Programme for the Executive and Senior Management Team, focussing on Championing a Culture of Respect. This has been delivered regularly over the past 3 years.