



Professional Services Firm – Respect@ Work

Objectives

Steps have been working in partnership with a top 4 Professional Services Firm since 2009 to develop a Diversity and Inclusion programme that engages the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the first instance and subsequently reaches out to the entire UK employee population of over 12,000.

The firm was keen to emphasise the role of the SLT in championing diversity by looking not just at the business case, but also at the behaviours the leaders needed to be modelling and encouraging in others, in order to ensure the success of the Respect@works programme.

Steps worked in partnership with the firm to create a programme that focused on the benefits of Inclusion, using a *pull* not a *push* strategy that asked all delegates to consider what makes the firm a 'great place to work' and how can they contribute to that. Leadership was encouraged at *all* levels – visible in the championship of the SLT and equally manifest in the behaviours and confidence of all staff.

We wanted to avoid creating a two tier programme, as we felt this would be counter cultural to the key aim of inclusivity. The challenge was to convey a consistent message to all delegates, in all service lines, in all geographic locations. Put simply, we wanted to bring Diversity and Inclusion into the heart of the business and make it part of the fabric of the organisational culture.

Our Approach

The Respect@work programme engaged all staff in a blended learning experience that mixed face to face learning interventions with cutting edge e-learning techniques.

Every intervention was bespoke, tailored to each individual service line, dealing with issues identified through research and development. This is critical in the development of any Diversity and Inclusion programme. If it doesn't resonate with delegates - if it doesn't connect viscerally – you won't win the hearts and minds and achieve lasting behavioural change.

Initially, senior leaders across all service lines at the firm were introduced to Respect@works via high-impact, 3 hour, face to face learning interventions facilitated by Steps. These mixed drama based training with facilitated discussion around the business case for Diversity and Inclusion and the leader's role in achieving success. There was also a large emphasis on sustaining the momentum – getting the SLT to develop meaningful, practical and manageable solutions for taking the Respect@works message forward and working with their teams to maximise the benefits of a truly inclusive culture.

In tandem with the face to face training, Steps also developed the supporting e-learning package that was entirely reflective of the programme delivered to the SLT. Through filmed drama, we explored issues of inclusion and asked the viewer 'what would you do in that situation?' The programme posed questions and allowed delegates to see situations from many perspectives – highlighting unconscious biases and exploring the consequences of these perceptions. A through line is supported by presenters who introduce new ideas and concepts alongside supporting vox pops and input from key influencers at the firm. Critically, there was no pass or fail element, as again, this was viewed as counter cultural.



Outcomes

The programme is still live within the firm.

Success will be measured long term, through employee engagement surveys, recruitment and retention, as well as through first level evaluation methods where there is already a clear pattern of success emerging. The establishment of an inclusive 'Respect Culture' is seen as a preferable long-term measure of success and we continue to work with the firm to achieve this.

Respect@work is the start of a long term journey in an organisation that can already boast about significant success. The programme is attracting attention from other regions, with conversations ongoing with the firm in India and the USA as a result of the halo effect of the UK programme. Subsequent interventions are already in the planning stages, and these will continue to carry the programme forward and ensure the ultimate outcome - a global culture of respect at the firm.