



Shaping up Management Behaviours...

Objective

After a recent integration programme, Virgin Active wanted to invest in equipping their leaders with the key management and communication skills for their dynamic and expanding business. They were looking for an engaging programme to bring their HR policies and procedures to life, enable their teams to use them in practical situations and align management behaviours to Virgin Active values and principles.

As an energised and adventurous organisation, Virgin Active were keen to work with a team that reflected their culture, were able to inspire their people and could demonstrate impact. Steps fitted the bill and we were approached to create and deliver a tailored, UK wide programme.

Our Approach

'Managing my Managers' and 'Managing my People' were two distinct, but carefully aligned programmes which Steps developed in partnership with Virgin Active. We needed to create a programme that brought managers together from different locations to effect a shared vision and understanding of what positive management behaviours looked like and how these could be applied to benefit employees, teams and the business as a whole.

We began with a period of research and development which ensured the content was credible. Our delivery team visited Virgin Active Health Clubs across the UK, met people – even worked out! Some of our team members were already Virgin Active members, so this gave us an additional, unique insight. 'Managing my Managers' brought together General Managers from across the UK in small groups for a day long programme. The day focused on equipping managers to have – and help others have – difficult conversations in a positive way. We worked with a Virgin Active representative and an employment lawyer to frame the legislative and the business case for effective management conversations and positive leadership behaviours.

Using techniques including interactive scenarios, group roleplay, mock mediation and facilitated discussion, we led delegates to explore the issues and develop skills in managing the key challenges before they escalate. This programme was about building skills in 'enabling' conversations – encouraging delegates to see feedback as a positive tool for problem solving as well as an opportunity to develop their people. We explored the merits of building a positive culture through effective listening skills, questioning techniques and managing with respect.

'Managing my People' engaged over 500 heads of department from regions across the UK in half day workshops. With roughly 25 delegates per session, we used interactive drama to explore challenging conversations and used a simple learning model to introduce a theoretical approach to effective behaviour change. Delegates also worked in small groups on tasks which encouraged the sharing of best practice within peer groups, gave an opportunity for valuable club-to-club learning and, ultimately, led to a shared understanding and agreement on key commitments aligned to Virgin Active values.

Evaluation & Outcomes

Feedback on the training was very positive. Dominic Boon, Head of People at Virgin Active said; 'Steps' team were absolutely excellent. Our General Managers responded very well to their refreshing and engaging style of training. This is great news and I hope that our partnership will grow from this point onwards."

One year on from the launch of the programme, Virgin Active reassessed all delegates, and found that not only could they remember key sections of the day, but they could explain and demonstrate when they had used these behaviours in their job.