



Customer-Centricity: Blended learning for Senior Leaders

Objectives

Westminster City Council engaged Steps to develop and deliver a customer module for their Senior Leader's Development Programme. The module focused on putting the customer at the heart of the organisation, and exploring this commitment from a senior leader's perspective. Defining and understanding the leader's role in this objective was crucial, as was highlighting the importance of empowering their teams. A behavioural change was needed to create a customer-centric organisation and Westminster identified Steps as a leading provider of the experiential approach they believed would drive this culture change.

Approach

We began developing the programme, in line with the Westminster Standard (an organisational behaviour model in place at the council). We needed to position customer-centricity as a commercial imperative and encourage the senior leaders to begin identifying and exploring their own behaviours and realising how they can support behaviour change elsewhere within the organisation. Our aim was to build a shared vision of the necessary change, empower individuals to start making positive changes to their own behaviour, feel confident to challenge the behaviour of others and look ahead to some initial action planning and individual commitments to new ways of working.

Supporting - as well as stretching - the senior leaders was crucial to Westminster. They wanted a package that had high intellectual challenge as well as emotional engagement. Steps were able to deliver this with a three-pronged approach; an e-learning package, a live session with a pre-course questionnaire and a series of action learning sets. Each element needed to be effective both as a single learning tool, as well as part of a blended learning package.

The e learning tool used provocative questioning and robust analysis for the leaders to identify where they were succeeding and where they were failing the customer. Self-reflection allowed them to consider their individual role in creating a customer-centric organisation.

The drama based, interactive live session enabled the leaders to consider and explore the impact of their actions and behaviours on the end customer. These sessions presented an opportunity for the leaders to share best practice, identify for themselves where their own gaps lay and begin solving their own dilemmas.

The interactive sessions only happened once, so participants self nominated to take part in the ongoing action learning sets, which were facilitated by Steps. The action learning sets gave an opportunity for participants to discuss specific dilemmas and challenges and find positive solutions, keeping the customer-centric agenda alive in the hearts and minds of the leaders of Westminster.

Westminster city Council worked closely with Steps to ensure this behavioural change lived on beyond the leadership module by implementing a series of long term measures, including action learning sets. These action learning sets were facilitated by Steps in the first instance, but over time became self-facilitating groups of leaders within the Council.

Manish Bhartiya, Organisational Development Consultant at Westminster City Council, was delighted with the results: *'We were very happy with the way the module was delivered and the feedback was great as well – I would be happy to recommend steps to any organisation.'*

Outcomes

Feedback was consistently high and delegates became internal advocates for the programme, recommending the sessions to their peers. One commented: "It was a very useful programme, allowing you to develop your own insights. It was much better than the more traditional format." Another said 'This really put a mirror to what a manager does and actually says! It was a fantastic session.'