



Applying a Consultative Approach with a Global Reinsurer

Steps creates an interactive programme to engage a department around the benefits of collaborative working...

Objective

Having worked with our client, a multinational reinsurance and risk management business, Steps were invited to create a programme with the critical aim of engaging staff with a more consultative approach to work and workplace relationships. The resulting full-day programme engaged the entire marketing team from senior management to more junior level a mix that was essential in establishing a level playing field from which to develop a more consultative working culture.

Our objectives were to shift internal mindsets within the function around what it means to work collaboratively, challenge the 'status quo' of current workplace behaviours and explore the merits of a building a working partnership, rather than focusing on a transactional approach to interactions. What does a consultative approach look like? What behaviours should be modelled within a consultative culture?

Approach

Challenges to the programme included a degree of internal scepticism – why challenge the status quo? We combatted this through encouragement of upward assertion (in an environment where this was not commonplace). We also explored managing emotional reactions as delegates looked at their own and others' perceptions.

After detailed research to really begin to understand the issues and establish a common language, we began writing a solution which client stakeholders reviewed before sign off. The interactive scenarios were used to hold up a mirror to the existing culture of this particular area of the business. We wanted to give delegates a chance to see the kinds of behaviours that typified interactions between this function and their wider client community. By creating a consensual understanding of 'the way things are' Steps were then able to facilitate delegates in a deeper discussion about 'the way we would like things to be'.

Having agreed a way forward, delegates also had the opportunity to practice consultative conversations through facilitated roleplay, with roleplayers simulating some of the personality traits that delegates found most challenging in others. We also used established learning models – focusing on Transactional Analysis, listening skills and questioning techniques.

Outcomes

Feedback was exceptional, with 100% agreeing that the course was practical, relevant and a good investment of their time. 100% felt that Steps had valuable expertise to share on the topic of consultative working and 90% said our approach was effective and memorable as a learning tool. One delegate commented 'I loved this course, I learned a lot and the actors allowed me the ability to see behaviours/reactions more clearly, from an outside perspective. This was one of the best training courses I've attended'. Our client is continuing to measure the longer term impact of this intervention – but early signs are already looking positive.