



PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

Quality can be a tender and fragile thing for it relies on the commitment of its people who are by their nature changeable and subject to cultural and economic influence. Quality is particularly vulnerable when people are busy or are working in fear of redundancy. If morale or confidence goes down so might quality; and then everyone suffers in a circle so vicious that if not broken a company may suffer irreparable damage, as tainted corporate reputation spreads like a virus.



Difficult times however, can sometimes be the optimum moment to review corporate culture and re-write the company book. Charles

Handy's The Doughnut Principle is a neat way of dividing workload into two areas: the centre ring is the area of enforcement that contains the tasks and procedures that must be executed without question; Handy calls this 'the essential core' - while the outer ring is where individuals can use their creativity to produce great initiatives in their own unique style that is fulfilling for them and that also contributes towards corporate goals.

The Doughnut Principle reproduced with kind permission

A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION ABOUT QUALITY

So how do organisations keep staff focused on quality? Gallions Housing Association have just won 2 "London Excellence" awards for the second year running - last year scooping the 'Leadership' and 'Making Partnerships Work' awards, this year securing the 'People Involvement & Development' and 'Results Focus awards'. In this issue (*see right*) Mike Robinson, Planning and Performance Manager at Gallions provides a fascinating insight.

COACHING TOOLS – Appreciative Inquiry

Organise a workshop to discuss only what is 'right' within the organisation. 1. **Discover** - locate 'the positive core'; 2. **Dream** – create a new and clearer vision 3. **Design** a strategy to achieve that vision; 4. **Destiny** – fulfil and sustain the vision.

ENERGY INTERVIEW: - Mike Robinson, Gallions

David Finney: How do you keep your staff engaged and motivated?

Mike Robinson: We have revised our approach and now link individual staff objectives to the achievement of our Business Plan objectives. All KPIs are reported on a scorecard which displays a traffic light system on the intranet so that everyone can see their performance compared to overall achievement. Individual objectives are agreed each year and appraisal outcomes are linked to achievement of objectives. We call this the golden thread. We have also done work with all our staff identifying 3 things they do every day which help in the achievement of the business plan and produced an aide-memoire for each staff member to refer to.

DF: What L&D techniques do you employ?

We have the majority of training in-house, provided by an in-house L & D co-ordinator which has improved the quality of training as well as the focus. We have reviewed the induction programme and now link it to an explanation of the business plan, the KPIs and the scorecard and how they can contribute.

DF: What is currently your biggest challenge as an organisation?

Maintaining quality of services whilst managing and reducing costs.

DF: What is your approach during these difficult times?

MR: We are reviewing our approach to core services (things we have to do) and non-core (things that we would like to do) and will make some efficiency savings based on this approach.

DF: What are the essential ingredients to effective leadership at work?

MR: Communicating the purpose, vision and values to our people in a way which translates into their everyday work and makes sense to them. Encouraging constructive feedback and making changes based on learning.

DF: What are the three things that you most appreciate about your organisation?

MR: Our uniqueness in being based in a small area; that the staff are able to get on with one another and; we are clear about what we are trying to achieve.

QUICK QUESTION

Who recently said: "Now is precisely the time to keep investing in the skills and talents of our people; it is the people we employ who will get us through."?