

Strategy, Focus and Performance in a NHS Workforce Development Confederation

Focus:

NHS: Clear purpose and focus, demonstrating progress, strategy, strategy mapping, balanced scorecard, team working, understanding the system and performance management.

Client

The client was the Workforce Development Confederation (WDC) of a Strategic Health Authority (SHA). This WDC had a budget of over £100m for training and developing health professions within its region. WDCs support a wide variety of health trusts in their area and are frequently pulled in many directions with limited budgets. WDCs have to look at the future demands on the workforce commission training for Health professionals. They also act like the HR department of its associated SHA, supporting the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals, setting career development paths, supporting leadership and assisting with organisational change in the various health trusts.

Client need

The Chief Executive of the WDC described her need as:

- 1) Strategy: Help us focus on what matters, communicate it effectively and demonstrate progress and achievement.
- 2) Performance management role: Improve decision making for us and our partners
- 3) As a team: Develop our skills, capabilities and joint working. Help us create a greater understanding of each other's roles and contribution

Overview of project

The first stage was to ensure that the whole management team had a common view of the future, their context and challenges for the WDC. To achieve this we helped them develop a 10-year view of the NHS and how it could develop through to 2015. This included underlying drivers of change, changes in the Government and DoH roles, how SHAs would evolve, statutory changes, the emergence of the NHS confederation, changes in education providers, changes in the trusts and healthcare providers, new systems and contracts taking effect, the implications for the workforce and of course the patients. Despite there been options and discussions as to how quickly things might occur, this provided an important baseline for the next stage.

So what were the implications for the workforce specifically? They had detailed models of workforce changes, but they found it hard to articulate and explain the drivers of change easily, even amongst themselves. Again we helped them create a collective story of how such changes as the development of new care pathways and a graduation of care, new roles in integrated facilities, specialist care in primary care settings, the emergence if practitioners with special interests, the move to disease, case and self management, changing recruitment practices, the breakdown professional barriers all affected the workforce profile, recruitment needs and working

practices. They then filled in the hard numbers around this and provided the real world examples of how it changes patient's lives.

We used all this to develop a clear view of where the WDC should put its attention. This was developed as a "Strategy map". This captured on a page the objectives of the WDC's many stakeholders, the WDC's key objectives, and (most importantly), the underlying cultural and organisational changes that the WDC management team and staff had to make to deliver these changes and satisfy their many stakeholders.

The whole approach was introduced at a management awayday that included the many stakeholders on the WDC's board. Alongside presentations from key players in the SHA, Mental health, PCT, Hospitals and other caring professions. The Chairman and many of the attendees described this as the most effective day they had spent together for a very long while.

From here the WDC management team were able to develop their strategy map with measures that told them how they were delivering their strategy and roll out the approach to the rest of the WDC's staff.

Results and Benefits

Whilst focusing the strategy, one of the most noticeable benefits has been to bring the team closer together and improve the quality of dialogue amongst them. Our approach had helped them, as a team, understand what had blocked communication internally. They quickly reported improvements in how they communicated.

As a result of the work, the management team now have a much clearer focus on where they were going, where they agree, what to focus on, and how to manage it. In addition, the Chief Executive kept the maps and diagrams we produced on her office walls to explain her strategy and issues to her visitors and subsequently all the staff. There have been lasting changes from the work.

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- Communicate the strategy so the whole organisation is mobilised
- Work more effectively as a team, learning together, as the strategy evolves
- To bring about change in organisations, by developing the beliefs, culture and behaviours of high performance
- Ensure strategy and performance leads to results.

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