

MANAGING IMPOSED CHANGE

Customer Description

The Parole Board for England and Wales exists to make risk assessments to inform decisions on the release and recall of prisoners with the ultimate aim of protecting the public. Our client was the secretariat, a 45 strong team of Civil Servants who prepare the reports, manage the process and co-ordinate the decisions of the Board Members who make the ultimate decisions.

Background

Changes in Government priorities for the Criminal Justice System, changes in legislation and recent judicial rulings have imposed significant changes in workload, work practices and public expectations of the Parole Board and other agencies. Their workload has increased dramatically in response to these factors and the Government's modernisation agenda. This has required changes in working practices and significant levels of recruitment. There has been a seemingly endless stream of initiatives.

Services Provided

Following discussions with the Chief Executive and the HR Team, a tailored programme for the Senior Management Team was developed to meet the following specific requirements:

- Identify recent change initiatives
- Review performance and outcomes
- Identify characteristics of successful and unsuccessful processes
- Understand the change process
- Understand the need for managed communication
- Understand how change affects individuals and their emotional state
- Understand resistance
- Evaluate options for managing resistance
- Developing approaches to support staff through the process.

We also provided feedback on the issues raised in the workshop and a summary report including recommendations for future actions.

Outcomes

It was clear from the workshop that the Parole Board is a lot better at coping with change than it tends to give itself credit for. This was reinforced by the Chief Executive's feedback on how their performance is seen by related bodies.

The team was able to identify the attributes of change initiatives which are likely encourage success and those which are likely to hinder progress. All concerned noted the key issues of clarity of objectives, communication and involvement.

Team members were able to recognise that they may be more intuitively aware of the logic behind some of the imposed changes than their staff would be. This means that they need to be aware of the need to communicate over issues that they may consider to be self-evident.

Similarly, it became evident to the senior team that need to be aware that at any stage the perception of staff may be different to their own and that they should be prepared to offer support during the implementation stage.

The team left with specific action plans and the follow up report suggested areas for improvement. These have been assessed along with feedback from their recent successful "Investors in People" reappraisal and several are being implemented.

Feedback

"The session on positively and negatively perceived changes and why was excellent – we can build on this"

"It helped to concentrate my mind on a wide range of issues that are raised at times of change. This very important in view of the changes facing the board and individuals at this time. The key is now to put what we have learned into practice and not forget what the session taught us."

" I have covered most of the theory before ... what I did learn about was the reactions and thoughts of my colleagues"

" A very useful refresher and perhaps too a timely reminder of forgotten truths"

All delegates thought that the programme would be useful to other managers in their organisation and several thought that other organisations would benefit from it.