



## **Culture eats logic for breakfast: understanding the ‘soft’ side of managing transformative change**

Most senior managers will have worked in organisations that were implementing major change and will recognise that every stage of transformative change has its unique challenges. When implementing major change almost all organisations will make a significant investment in a formal programme management methodology such as MSP, PRINCE II or Agile plus a programme management office and team. The more complex the change the more effort and resource is typically set

aside to manage it and there is ample evidence to show this is a good investment. However, organisations are made out of people and the focus on project methodology can sometimes cause organisations to ignore ‘soft’ or ‘people’ issues. These issues are often the most challenging ones that a manager has to face in implementing change as they touch on things central to who people are and what shapes their behaviour. Effective understanding and management of ‘soft’ issues

is the emotional yin to the logical yang of formal project management processes. Furthermore, it is often management of these issues which can turn around a poorly thought through change plan or prevent an otherwise well thought through programme from succeeding. This workshop explores these ‘soft’ issues in order to better equip senior managers, and in particular those managing major change, to identify and address them and the topics covered will include:



## **Culture eats logic for breakfast – understanding beliefs and hierarchies**

Every organisation small or large will have a 'culture' or set of beliefs, assumptions and power relationships that determine which behaviours people believe will be rewarded and which they believe will be punished. This culture may have been laid down over many decades; it is seldom talked about openly, never written down and tends to be much more powerful than rules or job descriptions flowed down the management chain. Understanding and changing it can be critical in successfully implementing change and the workshop will address what culture is and how it can be understood and shaped.

## **Stories, myths and legends - successful leadership means effective communication**

Clarity in the change vision and communicating it effectively are essential to gaining support throughout an organisation. Effective leaders and change managers must be able to engage emotionally and communicate

a vision effectively to gain active support for it. This often involves becoming story tellers or visionaries who create narratives that have the power to change beliefs and behaviours. The workshop will explore models of leadership, the value of stories and how they can be tailored and applied to different stakeholders and situations when leading change.

## **Trust, support, respect and honesty – choosing to have difficult conversations**

Transformative change can have many real and perceived downsides and often challenges people at every fundamental level. Will their job's status be reduced? Will valued working relationships be at risk? Will their future employment security be at risk? If there is a willingness to be honest and have difficult conversations change is much more likely to happen and to 'stick'. This requires managers at all levels to develop emotional intelligence, learn how to listen actively, have difficult conversations and actively manage their teams through big changes. The workshop will look at specific tools to support

managers in having 'difficult' conversations and having to manage change and people not just service delivery.

The aim of the day is to take the delegates through some exercises and discussions as well as some case studies that illustrate these themes and give them a take away pack containing some further reading and references. It aimed to help senior managers and change managers avoid problems from the outset or unlock problems that had seemed intractable.

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## **We believe in conversations**

We are always happy to discuss these issues, and can point you to many free sources of advice and information, and help you to develop your thinking with no charge and no obligation. If you wish to commission work, we are available through G-CLOUD, the ESPO professional services framework, and many other pre-qualified and compliant procurement routes.

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