

Case studies

February 2017

Developing
managers to
manage *sustainable*
employee engagement,
health and well-being

Introduction to case studies

The interview data was used to create two case studies – one for a charity and one for a private sector organisation. Both organisations were ‘advanced’ in their management development journey, that is, they had considered most of the factors found to be important for the success of the management development programme and had therefore reached higher levels in the maturity framework.

A further, third case study was also developed. This describes an organisation that took part in the first stage of the research in 2014, as a result of which they received a gap analysis report. In 2015–16 the organisation took part in an action-learning process, designed to help it take action to focus on the identified gaps in their management development approach. The write-up of this case study therefore contains in-depth information about how and why they adapted and evolved their management development programme.

Case study 1: A charity

About the organisation and development programme

The organisation is a charity that employs approximately 4,000 people and is a values-based, person-centred organisation. It spends approximately £90,000 on management development per year. The programme to which this case study relates is a *core management development programme*, which has been running for the last five years. Being a charity, the organisation is limited by resources and has to carry out management development programmes in a realistic and practical way. Prior to this programme, all development programmes at this organisation were outsourced. In contrast, the core management development programme was designed in-house, ensuring that it aligns to the principles of the organisation and meets the needs of the managers, challenges their thinking and enables them to develop new skills. The organisation strongly believes in engaging the managers in the development of the programme: they want them to contribute rather than feel they are having something 'done to them'.

Before the intervention

It was felt that managers had often been promoted to manager level without being given an appropriate management toolkit. The job description was also very task-oriented, though this was later reviewed to place a greater focus and emphasis on the role of leaders. With these issues in mind, an in-house training needs analysis questionnaire was developed around core management skills, which managers were asked to complete; the questionnaire covered a variety of topics, such as finance, strategy, performance management, people and operational practice, and asked questions such as 'Where do you feel you have experience?', 'Where do you feel you have knowledge?' and 'Where could you do with guidance?' From this, development needs were identified. The results of this needs analysis were used to produce a paper to be taken to the board, which demonstrated the skills gaps and the potential return on investment for running a programme; as a result of board buy-in, two specialists were recruited into the learning and development team.

The intervention programme

Ten workshops were created to develop managers' knowledge and skills. Additionally, the organisation wanted to provide opportunities for the managers to develop their peer group network, by sharing their experiences. The topics covered include recruitment and selection, effective communication skills, finance for non-financial managers, and performance management. Workshops were carried out with managers to give them feedback on the training needs analysis questionnaire they had completed and to inform them of the next steps. When designing the programme, expert knowledge was sought from specialists. For example, when designing the workshop on finance, a specialist in finance from within the organisation worked with the facilitator to identify learning objectives. Additionally, the specialist was involved in delivering the development programme to the managers, thus enabling relationships to develop within the organisation.

The programme included many different activities, such as discussing the difference between management and leadership, encouraging managers to share and discuss their knowledge and experience, and underpinning this with theory where possible.

The programme ran for ten months, one day a month, and covered one subject per month. The programme continues to be run annually.

Following the intervention

Before and after each workshop, each manager completes a questionnaire. The facilitator examines the completed pre- and post- questionnaires and the facilitator's remit includes following up anything that they think is necessary. It may be that answers from the questionnaire identify how an aspect of that workshop can be carried out differently. The facilitator is both a peer to the group and an informal coach. It is proving very useful to have an in-house facilitator because, if any of the managers have queries or issues, it is easy for them to contact the facilitator or bounce ideas off the facilitator. Strong relationships are built during the course of the programme.

Managers receive feedback on their learning, through the supervision and appraisal process in place in the organisation. There are a minimum of four supervisions per year and one formal appraisal, but some managers may choose to have a supervision every month.

Case study 1 (continued)

The success of the programme is measured by the pre- and post-development programme questionnaires, which assess participants' level of competence before and after. In addition, HR metrics are also examined, such as staff turnover and the number of disciplinaries; conversations with line managers are also conducted.

After the ten sessions, the development programme is reviewed, refreshed and updated. The organisation is continually growing and, to remain sustainable, its managers need to have the right skills and to grow in a way that reflects the market, therefore the management development programme needs to change and evolve.

What factors have facilitated the management development programme process?

- **Senior management support** – senior management was very supportive with regards to running these programmes.
- **Resources to recruit a specialist facilitator** – due to buy-in from the board, resources were made available to recruit two specialists into the learning and development team; one was a specialist facilitator.
- **People- and strategy-focused organisation with long-term perspective** – the organisation was, and still is, very aware of where it is now, where it needs to be in five years, and developing the strategy for how to achieve that.
- **Flexibility and expertise of the facilitator** – the facilitator had the expertise and flexibility to decide which exercises were best to use on the day of the workshop to facilitate the learning and ensure the objectives were achieved.
- **Running the course for one day a month** – this minimised the impact on the managers' day job of being away from the office. Furthermore, the time between each session enabled managers to be challenged in their thinking during the workshop and then have time to put the learning into practice.
- **Peer group network** – the development programme was designed to provide opportunities for the managers to get together and share their experiences; this enabled a peer-group network to develop.

What have been barriers to running the management development programme?

- **Finding time for people to go on the course** – this barrier has been overcome by running the course for one day a month over ten months.
- **Limited by resources** – the nature of being a charity means that resources are rather limited.
- **Unconsciously incompetent** – people aren't aware of what they don't know; they may say they feel confident to coach others, but actually haven't been developed or adequately trained to coach.

Case study 2: A private company

About the organisation and development programme

The organisation is a large private sector company that employs approximately 10,000 people in the UK. The programme that this case study relates to is a *health and well-being programme* that is implemented by the occupational health and well-being team. In its current form the programme has been running for about two years. The bespoke programme comprises three elements, as follows:

- 1 Healthy Minds – managers attend a four-hour workshop.
- 2 Pressure Points – managers and their teams take part in a stress risk assessment.
- 3 Mindful Management – where appropriate, managers use a second online 180-degree questionnaire to help them develop their managerial style to prevent stress, promote engagement and enhance well-being. Mindful Management is triggered by a team being identified as a high-risk area on Pressure Points but can also be used independently.

More detail about each element is provided below.

Across the business as a whole the programme is not mandatory, but some areas of the business have made attending the Healthy Minds workshop mandatory for their managers. The culture of the organisation has gradually shifted and there is now greater recognition of the value of the programme, suggesting that buy-in from senior management is progressively being achieved. Currently the organisation is looking at how the programme is evaluated.

Before the intervention

A few years ago there was a renewed focus on well-being within the organisation because there was awareness that common mental health problems were the biggest health issue for the business and they wanted to do something to address that. Prior to the introduction of the current programme, there had been a programme around stress at work for about ten years, which had evolved gradually over the years until eventually the Healthy Minds workshop, as mentioned above, was developed. Following the implementation of Healthy Minds, the stress risk assessment process was re-evaluated as the company wanted to take a more preventative approach. This led to the development of Pressure Points and Mindful Management. The intervention (Healthy Minds) and the two follow-up elements, Pressure Points and Mindful Management, were piloted in a variety of ways, and the order described above was found to be the most effective, so the programme was implemented in this format. At the pilot stage, the programme was evaluated very thoroughly using training evaluation questionnaires and face-to-face feedback sessions.

The intervention programme

The programme is for any manager who has someone reporting to them. Managers are invited to attend the Healthy Minds workshop by their business area rather than by the occupational health and well-being team. This ensures that the managers view the programme as something that is valued by the part of the business they work in.

Healthy Minds is a four-hour workshop that focuses on raising awareness of common mental health problems, the impact they have on the organisation, how managers might be able to spot them and what they should do about them. In addition, general tips on maintaining good well-being and why that is important are also discussed. During this workshop managers are also taken through the organisation's e-guide to mental well-being. The workshop is presented by members of the occupational health and well-being team, who aim to make the workshop personal, practical and applicable.

The programme is positioned to fit the organisational strategy, as the vision for the last few years for the organisation has been to have excellent customer service; there is recognition that, if their employees aren't engaged and well, they will not be able to achieve their desired excellent customer service. However, the programme is always tweaked to ensure its relevance to the particular cohort; and during the delivery the facilitators are very flexible, so the session can go in different directions to meet the needs of the cohort involved.

Case study 2 (continued)

Following the intervention

Following attendance at the Healthy Minds workshop, managers are invited and strongly encouraged to use the stress risk assessment, Pressure Points. Managers should discuss the anonymised, collated results with their team and explore what actions can be taken as a group. They are encouraged to do this annually to keep reviewing the situation. They are also asked to integrate any action planning that comes out of the team discussion on the stress risk assessment results into subsequent team meetings.

If Pressure Points indicates a high risk of stress, managers are automatically registered to use Mindful Management, which aims to equip them with tools to prevent stress, promote engagement and enhance well-being, including conducting an online 180-degree questionnaire about their management approach. In addition, this second intervention is available to all managers, even if a high risk of stress is not indicated. The results of the 180-degree questionnaire are fed back to the individual manager at a facilitated session. Following this, there is an expectation that the manager will come up with a three-step action plan: one thing they will continue doing, one thing they will do less, and one thing they will improve. Managers are also asked to integrate this action plan into their personal development plan. Unfortunately, the occupational health and well-being team is not in a position to 'police' managers to ensure they carry out these actions; however, the development programme as a whole is positioned in line with performance management, so it is hoped that this provides the follow-up needed.

There is no expectation that managers should be mental health professionals and they are therefore not expected to do everything themselves; they are reminded that the occupational health and well-being team are there for support and should be used when needed. However, they have responsibility for using the risk assessment and should be trying to manage people in a way that prevents stress, promotes well-being and enhances engagement.

The business's initial target was to ensure that all the managers attended Healthy Minds; now the target has shifted to measuring how many managers have used Pressure Points. This builds greater awareness of what managers are doing after they have attended the workshop, thus ensuring managers are using their learning and not just attending the workshop and taking no further action.

What factors have facilitated the management development programme process?

- **Linking common mental health problems to business costs** – being able to show the business how much it loses to absence from common mental health issues.
- **Changes in management and the business drive towards employee engagement** – new management bringing in more supportive management practices and being able to demonstrate to the business the links between well-being and engagement.
- **The business having claims against them** – this is unfortunate for the business, but has driven it to want to know how it can protect itself better.
- **More awareness of mental health** – generally people are talking more about mental health.
- **Charging a fee for cancelling without notice** – £100 is charged to a manager's department if they drop out without any notice, which has reduced the number of people who don't attend.

What have been barriers to running the management development programme?

- **People's perceptions of management** – people don't necessarily see managing mental health as part of the management role; sometimes it isn't until people are in the workshop that they see the importance.
- **Senior management** – sometimes senior management may not actually get in the way of running the development programme, but they are not championing it either; senior management championing the programme is a great facilitator.
- **Size of the organisation** – the organisation is huge and various parts of the business can work rather separately, so people aren't always aware of what is going on and the different programmes being implemented; it would help to have more coherence and be more integrated.

Case study 3: A transportation company

About the organisation and development programme

The organisation is a surface transport division of a large transportation company. During 2013–14, the organisation participated in the initial phase of Affinity Health at Work's 'Developing managers to manage sustainable employee engagement, health and well-being' research project. As an outcome of this, it received a gap analysis report, setting out its position in terms of the success factors for effective management development. The next stage of participation in the research project, during 2015–16, involved an action-learning process designed to support the organisation to take action to address the gaps identified.

Before the intervention

The gap analysis report created from the organisation's participation in the initial phase of the research project suggested that it had addressed some of the factors identified by the research as being important for effective management development, only partly addressed other factors and not addressed some factors, as shown below.



What is working well

Checklist responses suggested that the organisation had addressed the following factors:

Methodology

Programme is integrated with the wider organisational culture and practices.

Shared responsibility across all the relevant teams and functions, such as HR, health and safety, occupational health, L&D.

Managers

There are activities that build self-awareness and help managers recognise themselves as leaders (for example, upward/360 feedback, mentoring, coaching, use of psychometrics/occupational testing).

Managers are encouraged to value learning and development (for example through recognition schemes that place value on furthering knowledge).

Managers are supported to be confident in their management skills (for example ensuring positive, timely, specific feedback, mentoring, coaching).

Organisation

Organisational culture and climate are supportive of health and safety (for example demonstration of commitment to safety, employee awareness of health and safety).

The organisation has policies, processes and a work environment that are seen as accessible, helpful and supportive.

Participants' own managers and senior managers lead by example (for example role-model desired behaviours).

There are clear standards and expectations that managers need to adhere to (for example appropriate competency frameworks and performance objectives).



Ones to watch

Checklist responses suggested that the organisation had only partly addressed the following factors:

Methodology

Programme includes setting multiple goals for manager participants that are challenging but not unmanageable, specific and requiring effort over time.

Programme is seen as a process unfolding over time (three-plus months including practice and follow-up) rather than just a one-off activity.

Programme includes a range of development formats (effective formats include mentoring, coaching, lectures, group collaboration, management networks, multi-rater feedback, experiential learning and action-learning sets).

Senior leaders are supportive of the programme.

Managers

Consideration has been given to selecting managers for the development programme according to the following behaviours/characteristics that have been shown to influence learning. Leaders who:

- are supportive of their team
- display integrity
- are independent thinkers
- are effective performers.

Organisation

The organisation has a supportive culture (for example where there is an open dialogue with good two-way communication, employee voice, a climate of mutual respect and a climate in which people have the right to challenge others' behaviour, and where there is recognition of when individuals have done well).

The organisational climate is supportive of innovation (for example support for employees to take initiative, encouragement of open communication).

There is an organisational structure and culture of empowerment (for example affording employees the following: opportunity, information, support, resources, formal and informal power).

Senior leaders in the organisation are seen as engaging of others (for example inclusive, accessible, motivational and collaborative).

Participants' own managers are supportive of their learning (for example supplying incentives and feedback).

Managers have appropriate job demands that enable a focus on people management vs. operational demands.

Managers are clear of their role.

Managers perceive their work as meaningful.



What's missing

Checklist responses suggested that the organisation had not addressed the following factors:

Methodology

Consideration has been given to how to ensure that the programme is useful, beneficial and important to all stakeholders, including manager participants.

Programme aims and objectives are specific, clear and simple.

The name of the programme is appropriate in the organisation (for example fit with organisational language, brand, culture, population).

There will be opportunities for the managers to apply their learning.

Consideration has been given to how ongoing resources, for example financial, will be made available.

The gap analysis results were presented both to the parent company's occupational health team and to the organisation's senior management team. As a result, the senior management team agreed that the organisation would participate in the next phase of the research (as described in this case study), and the occupational health team agreed to fund this participation.

The intervention programme

The aim of the intervention was to help the organisation use the results from the gap analysis report to put in place as many of the success factors for management development as were relevant and possible in their particular context. In order to do this, a facilitated action-learning programme was set up to enable a group of people from within the organisation to prioritise the areas to address, identify the changes needed, develop an action plan and support its implementation.

The action-learning group was made up of:

- a member of the organisation's senior management team
- five operational managers from across the organisation
- the organisation's HR business partner.

The action-learning group met with the Affinity Health at Work facilitator three times. Between these meetings, the group met regularly to discuss and progress the actions agreed. The three meetings were as follows:

Meeting 1 – initiated the project. Group members participated in whole-group and pair discussion. The priorities that emerged from these discussions were as follows:

- 1 overall vision and commitment to well-being and engagement – from the top and cascaded throughout the organisation
- 2 prevention, early intervention, consistency and speeding up of disciplinary/grievance/suspension processes
- 3 reducing overload for managers to enable proactive behaviour
- 4 improving people management behaviour.

Actions designed to address these priority issues were identified and used to create an action plan for the group to take forward.

Case study 3 (continued)

Meeting 2 – allowed the group to report back on the actions taken, celebrate successes so far and update the action plan. The group reported some key successes:

- They had met several times since the initial meeting and were progressing the actions in a collaborative way – they had surprised themselves by how much they had achieved.
- One of the group members had initiated meetings with employees, providing an opportunity for employees to ‘meet your manager’ over coffee – these had been observed to generate better engagement and morale in the workforce.
- Cross-departmental training was being established.
- Senior management were more engaged with employees – going on visits and focusing more on people, not just results.
- Employee engagement and well-being had been added as a standing item to management meeting agendas.
- Communications between teams were seen to be improving.

Success measures were considered and the following were agreed to be valuable measures:

- number of meetings managers hold with employees
- employee survey response rates and scores
- HR data on grievances, disciplinarys, accidents, sickness absence
- feedback from employees on the ‘meet your manager’ meetings.

Meeting 3 – allowed the group to review progress, plan how to embed employee engagement and well-being activities into the business and clarify next steps. Successes since the last meeting included:

- further roll-out of ‘meet your manager’ meetings – these were initially met with scepticism, but now the manager is seeing marked improvements in attitudes
- notice boards set up in some sites
- meetings for first-line managers across the business planned, to help build relationships, share information, establish cross-organisation ways of working and identify which managers need support to develop their skills
- training needs analysis conducted with managers at all levels looking at the way matrix management is working
- communications champions have been informed of employee engagement and well-being activities and plans.

Results of the intervention so far and next steps

By the end of the three meetings, the project had achieved considerable success in terms of raising awareness and gaining buy-in within the organisation. A number of employee engagement and well-being activities had been piloted, including ‘meet your manager’ meetings and communication noticeboards. The feedback on these has been very positive and observations suggest that they have improved morale and attitudes in the parts of the business where they have happened. The action-learning group has picked up the project with enthusiasm and shown that these activities can make a difference; it has undertaken the actions planned and created a clear stream of activity to continue its work moving forward.

The next steps planned for the organisation are as follows:

- 1 **Build employee engagement and well-being into managers’ objectives** – the intention is to include employee engagement and well-being in all managers’ objectives, including the senior management team.
- 2 **Roll out ‘meet your manager’ meetings across the business** – the plan is for all managers to run these meetings in their part of the business, supported by a pack of materials and guidance from the action learning group.
- 3 **Support managers to develop management skills** – the plan is to provide development support for managers, including: continuing regular first-line manager meetings, looking specifically at these managers’ development needs, building consideration of sustainable engagement into development plans arising out of the training needs analysis already conducted, and rolling out a training module on ‘building engagement’.



CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk **W** cipd.co.uk

Incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered as a charity in England and Wales (1079797) and Scotland (SC045154)
Issued: February 2017 Reference: 7423 © CIPD 2017