

The successful integration of companies, departments and teams

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In the public, private, and third sectors organisations are merging and consolidating in the hope that they can achieve greater efficiencies, strategic advantage and enhanced customer service. But evidence shows that only 25% of mergers and acquisitions succeed in delivering these aspirations... with failure to integrate working cultures most often cited as the main reason.

Indeed, due diligence in integrating legacy cultures is often neglected in preference to the many more tangible matters that need attention, with disastrous consequences.

In December Bath Consultancy Group teamed up with Lumina Consulting, to deliver an experiential workshop.

It is always easier for us to see other people's professional or national cultures than it is to see the one we are in ourselves. That's where Bath Consultancy Group's experience in surfacing and working with cultures over many years comes in. In combination with Lumina Consulting, who have developed learning activities to address these issues, the workshop gave clients an opportunity to try out some practical tools and processes that are now being used to support managers facing merger and internal integration situations.

Here's one participant's account of the day: "The day helped us connect with the subject of why mergers are trickier than we think. We reviewed some case studies in terms of what had worked and what hadn't. We experienced merging using an exercise developed by Barry Oshry and realised that there are powerful emotional elements which are best described using words such as 'culture' and 'dominance'. We spent some time understanding why these elements are important and how to recognise the symptoms. We also looked at how to engage others in our organisations to ensure being able to put 'best practice' into practice."

Sally Woodward who attended the workshop valued "the experiential learning simulation; thought provoking - I would not have believed the visceral impact of the culture exercise."

Matthew Grey appreciated the "focus on key issues our firm is facing and the road map on how to put it all together" and Nick Gill highlighted "the opportunity to share the challenges we have in terms of change and the culture." Attendees also mentioned the insight into the dynamics that so often undermine groups coming together with different backgrounds.