

CASE STUDY

Building Transformational Change Capacity Post Capability Review



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“I was extremely impressed with the way in which Bath Consultancy Group consultants were able to slide alongside our senior leaders and create real positive impact so quickly. Their approach is testament to their expertise i.e. a fine balance of theoretical knowledge of organisational development and change coupled with quality skills in consulting and coaching. They helped lay the foundation for our ongoing transformation across DWP and, within my own functional area, ‘Organisation and People Development’, provided a real benchmark of excellence in developing and embedding internal OD and Change consulting skills. Their pedigree is strong, as a group of practitioners who bring enormous experience from across numerous sectors, both in corporate and consulting roles.”

Jerry Arnott, Director, Organisation and People Development, DWP

In the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we worked alongside the internal Organisational Change Centre of Excellence as partners on their change journey.

The first phase of the departmental Capability Reviews led to a programme of transformational change at DWP with the goals of improving customer experience, improving value for money for tax payers and improving staff engagement.

A team of consultants from Bath Consultancy Group (BCG) worked in the Department from March 07 – April 08. There were three aspects to the work (as summarised below) but these initiatives were integrated so that insights from each part of the programme served to inform work and learning in other areas.

1. BCG provided “Team Coaching” to the DWP Executive Team and Board, adding value in four spaces - working together; working apart; managing the current business; and leading transformational change. We also linked the effectiveness of the Executive Team with the Change Agenda’?

2. BCG worked in partnership with the internal DWP team in Organisation and People Development (OPD) to enhance their capability to provide first class OD consultancy to the Department. This included working alongside them consulting on:

- The structural review and re-organisation of Organisational Capability Centre of Expertise
- Arrangements for reducing headcount
- Advice on succession planning, transition support, talent management, and role assessments
- Coaching leaders to manage change in their teams
- Assisting with transition support to the new Director of OPD
- Delivering three Organisation Systems workshops to the Change Team (using the Barry Oshry Systems approach) and providing supporting methodology

LEARNINGS

3. BCG provided OD coaching and consultancy to the DWP Change Directorate, particularly to those involved in the Culture Change workstream, working in partnership with internal OD consultants to change the culture and improve the customer experience and also worked with key leaders in the Change Directorate to help them recognise that how they personally led change would also model the new culture for the organisation. This included design and facilitation of key workshops, and Senior Civil Service (SCS) conferences.

Skills transfer was a key element here. BCG worked with the internal change team through an explicit 'outside-inside' partnering on all pieces of work. At times, they were front of stage working directly with DWP leaders (e.g. designing and delivering a high impact and engaging Senior Civil Service conference) and in other circumstances, were coaching, co-ordinating and advising internal consultants to lead. This built the internal capacity to address change and identify cultural patterns blocking change.

Feedback from the internal consultants about what they valued about the work included:

- "Seeing the whole system in all aspects of work, even in one to one transition coaching."
- "Diversity in the consultants, real people with different strengths and weaknesses, not clones."
- "Willingness to think together."
- "Strong relationships with the consulting team - of trust, respect and understanding - and commitment to see things through, however difficult they became."

Challenges and lessons learnt include the importance of working across the team boundary to improve the relationship between the Executive Team and its key stakeholders, in particular the Change team. The benefits of integrating different elements of the Bath Consultancy Group work and the wider programme were also clear. Finally, in order to work effectively with DWP top management BCG

needed to field highly credible consultants with technical, intellectual and inter-personal skills of the highest order, who had access to the top quality intellectual property of Bath Consultancy Group.

The benefits realised from the assignment were tangible and appreciated by DWP. At the annual and two-year Capability Review it was noted by the reviewers that the effectiveness of the Executive team had improved significantly. Internal consultants became more capable and productive as a result, and were more effective as consultants to the Change Director of the multi-million pound Change Programme.

