



Driving RPID Forward

A model for achieving organisational change through staff engagement

For the Coalition Government's public sector reform programme to succeed, unprecedented levels of organisational change are now inevitable. With the support of The Keil Centre, one Scottish Government Directorate implemented rapid, sustainable and effective change through a process of staff engagement and collaboration.

The Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID) of the Scottish Government were intent upon achieving significant improvements to business efficiency, leadership and culture. Its new Senior Management Team (SMT) not only recognised the scale of the organisational change required, but also the importance of actively engaging staff in the journey. Their challenges included: -

- a need for early results and sustained momentum
- 800 geographically dispersed employees with diverse skills, agendas and potentially entrenched mindsets
- previous change initiatives having failed to meet their objectives, with resultant employee scepticism

At the time of going to press Louise Clarkson and Ken Gray have been short-listed for the British Psychological Society's Occupational Psychology Practitioner of the Year Award 2010 for their work with RPID.

Gathering

The process began with four one-day "Gathering Events" empowering 175 staff members from throughout the organisation to establish recommended actions on five key organisational improvement themes. The day was structured using modified evidence based interventions to provide a 'safe' environment to input ideas, and then work up solutions that would meet both efficiency and effectiveness criteria.

Keil Centre Directors Ken Gray and Louise Clarkson adapted well-established problem-solving models, making them both relevant and 'user friendly' for a large group environment. Both the SMT and staff worked collectively to generate a total of 135 recommendations. Each participant also produced a single action they would be committed to taking personally.

Making it Happen

Subsequent work with the SMT enabled the recommendations to be rationalised and organised into work-stream groupings. Staff were given the opportunity to volunteer for a workstream, and facilitated "Making it Happen" events set the implementation planning in motion. The Keil Centre's innovative modification of GROW coaching techniques presented a practical framework for groups to establish and develop the recommended actions.

Upon review, staff reported very high levels of engagement, with many recommendations already implemented, and significant further work stream activity progressing. These include a new governance structure, improved business planning and a revised finance strategy.

The increased appetite for involvement in change at all levels suggests that momentum to achieve the change objectives will be sustained.

“ This project had to overcome previous failures to deliver change programmes. The psychologists really helped us on the change journey. More importantly they helped staff overcome the fear of change and feel they could really influence their future. ”

Valerie McNiven, Chief Executive of RPID

For more information on organisational change and staff engagement, please contact Ken Gray: ken@keilcentre.co.uk.