

Diagram of the Month

Working Together



Working Together

Many Not For Profits experience challenges with working across federations and departments. Whilst united in their commitment to the mission of the organisation there can be differing beliefs about how to achieve the mission, different values that underpin decisions and different ways of working. Yet, working in an integrated way across departments can deliver stronger social and organizational marketing benefits whilst working more effectively across federated organisations can improve access to resources and talent.

Culture – what we value

The unspoken rules about “the way we do things around here” can be enormously influential on success. Cultures that are free from fear are more likely to innovate and improve as people do not worry as much about the consequences of failure. Cultures that “learn by doing” will outperform those that get analysis paralysis and spend their time planning rather than doing. As important as emotional intelligence is for individuals it is also vital that organisations understand and consciously manage their culture.

Understanding – conducting cultural surveys is an essential tool for evaluating prevailing cultures (there may be several); setting out actions to enhance the culture and monitoring improvement.

Process – what we do

Generally, people are more supportive of working together when they understand the role they are playing, they feel they have been heard, appropriately consulted and involved. Problems often arise when people think they should be involved in a decision but they are merely being told about it. Defining when people will be engaged in the following ways is valuable:

Involve – providing active participation in the formulation of strategy, directions and actions;

Consult – allowing input, feedback and comment upon a proposed strategy direction or issue; and

Inform – Appropriately telling people what will happen as a result of their input.

Clear expectations - managing expectations is vital, so documenting at the outset when and how people can have an input is critical. We have often created an “expectations agreement” that may set out who is involved in which decisions when.

People – how we behave

The culture of the organisation is made up of the behaviour of each individual – especially those at the top. How they behave sets the tone for what is acceptable, what is valued and what is off limits. When people are treated with respect, listened to and given feedback a positive culture can thrive. Overcoming the excuse of “I didn’t know” is essential. Building emotional intelligence requires: *self awareness* – aware of their own emotions; *self regulation* – an ability to control their own emotions and impulses – thinking before they act; *motivation* – more focussed on long term outcomes than short term battles; *empathy* – ability to identify with the feelings, wants, needs of others; *social skills* – good at relationship building and helping those around you shine.

Feedback - providing feedback, both formally through a 360 degree process and informally in day to day interactions, provides people with the information they need to behave in a way that is more effective. Positive feedback feeds confidence and constructive feedback builds competence. We need to create cultures that value feedback, are receptive to feedback and willing to act on feedback.

Trust – how we behave

Failure to address any one of the issues above can erode trust – our most valuable attribute. Trust is what we get when we let ourselves be vulnerable and are not taken advantage of.

More is a strategic marketing, management and fundraising consultancy specialising in helping not for profits increase their impact

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