

This is a short extract from a report written by Rubicon Writing Services for both a Government Agency and a specialist consultancy. For reasons of confidentiality both organisations have been amended to XXX and YYY.

## **ENGAGING PERFORMANCE FOR A UK GOVERNMENT AGENCY: (A STRATEGY TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE FROM A CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE THAT ALSO ENGAGES EMPLOYEES)**

### **Introduction**

The XXX Agency has recently embarked on a three year 'Communicating and Influencing Change Programme' to improve communications and services. The programme aims to improve the Agency's reputation with customers, to improve the quality of work, and to create more trust in the Agency's advice and opinion. As a result it is hoped that partner organisations will be more willing to work with the Agency and funding bodies will be more supportive. The programme also seeks to improve staff morale and wellbeing and improve working relationships and internal communications.

To help meet these objectives specialist consultancy YYY were recently commissioned by XXX Agency to undertake a review of their 'customer focus strategy' and make recommendations for improvements (including a refinement of existing performance measures) To achieve this objective YYY chose to employ their unique 'zzz process'. The work was conducted between March and May 2005.

The Agency's long-term vision is to ensure a rich, healthy and diverse working environment for present and future generations. To achieve this objective the Agency has defined a number of specific goals relating to eight themes. In order to deliver these desired outcomes the Agency has identified five critical roles for the future:

1. Efficient Operator
2. Modern Regulator
3. Influential Advisor
4. Informative Communicator
5. Catalyst of Change

In addition the Agency aims to improve the values and service standards that define and shape its brand and public image including a commitment to '*be a safe place where everyone is proud to work and everyone knows that their contributions are treated fairly and with respect*'.

### **Meeting the Challenges**

To achieve its mission, the Agency needed both staff and the public to understand its purpose, recognise the value of its work and to develop trust in its ability to deliver. This meant improving the effectiveness of communications and improving the customer/stakeholder experience.

The Agency's Directors committed to making customer focus a much higher priority for the organisation and a prominent measure in a new corporate scorecard. Several initiatives to address systems changes and cultural changes were also initiated in support of the new service strategy. These included an 'External Relations Strategy', and the introduction of a competency-based framework based on the 'Institute of Customer Service's' standards for customer service. It also measures customer satisfaction through annual market research.

## **Engaging Staff and Stakeholders – Transforming Culture**

To achieve success the Agency recognised that *all* employees - those involved in both internal and external customer service - needed to be fully engaged with the process. It was essential for staff to understand how the Agency operated and particularly how it defines success / adds value to the stakeholders. They needed to understand the objectives, the related measures and the organisational service targets.

YYY's experience of working on similar projects has proven that organisations need to truly harness the creativity and individuality of their staff. It is YYY's firm belief is that in order to gain full passion and commitment from people it is essential to provide them with security, esteem, recognition and justice, as well as with the right tools and competencies to do their job well. This requires involvement and alignment with the HR and training and development practices/policies of the organisation. Unfortunately in the XXX Agency it was clear that Processes had been designed from the Agency's internal perspective rather than to suit customers. The need to simplify the processes and make the Agency 'easy to do business with' therefore featured highly on the future strategic agenda.

Another issue was that there were no Key Performance Indicators linked to internal service measures on the Agency's balanced scorecard. This meant that personal performance measures were not linked to internal service thus reducing their perceived value and importance.

It was determined that a few well considered KPI's linked to the customer balanced scorecard should therefore be implemented and developed by the people who worked in internal service chains. Utilising YYY's proven processes a workshop was therefore convened and the rest of this article explains the details of this process. (Since completing the workshop the Agency has continued to adopt this method as part of its strategy formulation, management culture and systems improvement)

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