



Development Coaching Enabling a Leader to Improve Culture

Private Hospital - Healthcare

Client Story

Following a staff survey to appraise the culture status of all private hospitals in the group, it was revealed that a leader in charge of one hospital was in need of some personal development to improve the working environment for her and her team.

The organisation – Context

This organisation has a number of private hospitals across the UK. The hospitals are assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and, importantly, by the satisfaction rating of its patients.

Given such personal interaction with patients, the organisation wanted to understand how its staff felt about their working environment and local management at each hospital.

The senior leaderships vision is that their staff feel able to be involved in local improvements, have a clear sense of shared purpose and are able to deliver better care for their patients.

The leader – Context

The local leader was passionate about excellence. She set high standards in everything she did, only expecting of others what she was prepared to give herself.

As the Registered Manager, she was accountable for the management and performance of the hospital, and also to the Care Quality Commission.

She had almost three decades of hospital experience in both the public and private

sector, and had been in her current role for two years.

The challenges – for the organisation and the leader.

Following a staff culture survey, indications were that that one hospital in the portfolio had a culture of silent compliance and lack of accountability for results.

The HR Director wanted to understand what the underlying issues were that prompted this feedback.

The leader ran a hospital that was graded as Good by the CQC, and received consistently high ratings for patient satisfaction.

This confused both the HR Director and the hospital manager. Jointly the HR Director and the manager wanted to understand more. They personally asked staff for their opinions, however, feedback indicated that the culture was satisfactory, thus compounding the confusion.

The tailored coaching process.

Following open and honest discussion between the HR director and the hospital

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leader, it was decided that The Secret Coach would conduct interviews to understand staff concerns indicated in the initial survey.

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Through the staff interviews it was discovered that they felt the manager's autocratic style was restricting their ability to speak freely and make suggestions.

Realising that in order to improve the teams sense of engagement, the manager herself would need to modify her style, it was decided that a development coaching programme would be beneficial.

The development coaching programme of six sessions ran over a nine-month period.

The coaching focus – Defining development priorities

Staff Feedback indicated that the manager's style was perceived as 'command and control'. This led to staff feeling that they were unable to speak openly, make suggestions which resulted in a tendency to blame others when results were not as expected. The coaching sessions and ongoing support were designed to help evolve a new leadership style with the following priorities;

- i) Communicating passion and purpose that involve others:**
Assisting her to realise that her passion is a strength, that she is not alone and how to recognise passion in others.
- ii) Encouraging open feedback on possible improvements:**
Support in creating a culture where staff would be open and honest; this would involve how to deal with feedback that could be perceived as critical.

- iii) Promoting empowerment of decision making and accountability:**
Encouraging trust in her team to deliver excellence, and inspiring others to step up to the challenge.

The individually tailored coaching programme was focused on developing and achieving a more effective leadership style. The aim was to improve the perceived culture and results would be measured against a subsequent staff survey.

The impact - for the leader and the organisation

Following the development coaching programme, the next annual staff survey reported a substantial improvement;

- Senior staff had the confidence to take on more responsibility and local leadership.
- Each department had its own culture club leading initiatives for continuous improvement.
- The manager increased her capacity for open and productive discussions with senior staff thereby fostering a climate of mutual trust, honesty and accountability.
- The teams established their own standards and expectations beyond any the manager may have set.

The manager and HR Director were delighted with the individual and collective improvements and felt that it would power the hospital for the future.

In the words of the manager –

"It's been an interesting time for me. What I saw as just a measure [the staff survey] has become so much more. I now understand that our culture is about how my team need to feel part of delivering great care. I've changed my approach whilst maintaining my passion. Now I'm able to see that others share it too."

In the words of the HR Director –



"We are delighted that our talented, passionate Hospital Manager has gone through this development. Our culture means more to us than just a survey result, and to see her values

represented in others means she had created an environment that really works for patients and our staff.

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