

Raising strategic awareness of HR directors in healthcare

Due to ongoing change in the health care sector, HR Directors of a health care provider are leading their organization in a different direction and need to increase their strategic awareness. A development centre and a range of personality assessments builds their skills – see how.

The Strategic Health Authority, which founded the Leadership Academy, identified the need for a development program for the region's HR Directors (HRDs). This was to help them meet the challenges of ongoing change and empower them to lead their organization in nurturing a patient-centred approach. As the HRDs were increasingly being asked to fulfil an organizational development function, an overall strategic awareness was more necessary than ever.

Having already designed a competency framework for the Leadership Academy on behalf of NHS North West, our consultants were well placed to advise on possible development centres that would address these needs. We designed an event that would equip the HRDs with a wide range of essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours.

“Working closely with you on the development of the key competencies enabled us to co-create a bespoke development centre that would meet the needs of HR Directors in the North West,” explains Deborah Arnot, Deputy Director. “Coupled with our expert knowledge of the NHS context, [your] expertise in presenting and future agendas made for a cohesive, comprehensive product that was future-focused and tailored to the HRDs’ future role.”

Business Challenges

- Strategic awareness of HR Directors
- Change management
- Empowerment of staff

Company Profile

In the UK, the National Health Service North West Leadership Academy (NHS NWLA) empowers people in the north west of England to secure better health, care, and well-being outcomes through leadership. The Leadership Academy is a ‘Centre for Excellence’ in senior leadership and strategy development, and supports the region's senior leaders and their Boards to deliver the most effective healthcare to their local populations.

NHS North West Leadership Academy (HR Directors)

Solution

We began by organizing a 'Diagnosis and Discovery' event aimed firstly at describing the characteristics of the HRD population and identifying their development needs (diagnosis), and secondly at raising the HRD's awareness levels of their own style and giving them help to improve their approach in their day-to-day working lives (discovery).

Our consultants carried out a series of stakeholder interviews and competency mapping exercises using the NHS's own LQF (Leadership Qualities Framework). This enabled them to identify a benchmark for performance on several criteria, against which the HRD participants could be compared. The resulting event was a two-day development intervention comprising self-analysis, psychometric feedback and workplace simulations, which was attended by a total of 37 HRDs from across the North West region.

Before the event, participants were asked to complete their choice of the FIRO-B® or MBTI® Step I™ or Step II™ questionnaires, which look at different elements of personality and raise self-awareness. In addition, they completed the Potentia assessment, and the NHS's own tool, the LQF 360-degree feedback questionnaire, which defines an individual's performance against competencies that were also used in the development event.

The first day of the event saw a program of intensive but stimulating workplace simulations. The exercises were observed by consultants who later prepared reports based on individual performance against the benchmark competencies.

The second day consisted of feedback on, and consolidation of, the results of the personality questionnaires and observations from the pre-work and day one. Our consultants worked one-to-one with the participants to help them understand their personality results and to feed back their observations. This helped participants to identify their own strengths and possible blind spots in the context of organizational development and strategic leadership. This learning

Solution

- MBTI self-awareness and communication training
- FIRO teambuilding

“ The development of the key competencies enabled us to co-create a bespoke development centre that would meet the needs of HR Directors.”

Deborah Arnot,
Deputy Director, NHS North West Leadership Academy

NHS North West Leadership Academy (HR Directors)

was reinforced with peer feedback from the other participants, which was found to be especially useful.

Results

Feedback from the participants was very positive. 94% stated that the event would have a positive impact on their performance at work, all highly rating the levels of self-awareness it had helped them achieve, and 93% said they would use what they had learned back in the workplace “frequently” or “almost all the time”.

In addition, we provided an analysis of the overall group results on each of the LQF competencies, gleaned from the psychometric data and observations. The analysis showed that strategic influencing was a key development area for the HRDs. As this was also a key skill identified at the start of the project, we were commissioned to create a bespoke solution with two aims: to help leaders adapt their influencing style according to the situation and audience, and to raise their awareness of their own style and other ways of communicating in the context of their own organizational culture. It was hoped that this would give the HRDs a wider-ranging toolkit to dip into when thinking about, and taking the lead on, organizational development and other strategic initiatives.

The two-day workshop focused on a deeper understanding of the MBTI instrument and insights from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI™). This was followed by a discussion on stakeholder management where participants were encouraged to use their learning with real-life examples of people they needed to influence and wanted to improve their relationships with. The workshop finished with an action-planning session in which participants outlined how they would take their learning forward.

Feedback was very positive and everyone agreed it was likely to have a positive impact on their performance. One participant said, “It gave me time out to reflect on my practice and consider how I affect situations and the other people I wish to influence – and to work out how I might achieve my aims by understanding myself and them better.”

Results

- Higher self-awareness
- Ability to influence others and oversee change more easily
- Better working relationships



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