

Using MBTI insights to develop teams during organizational restructure

A large-scale organizational change at Macmillan Cancer Support will completely change the way a team works. How can it smooth the transition to the new structure?

Following our successful delivery of other development solutions, Macmillan Cancer Support approached our consultants to design and deliver a team development program for their East of England Patch team. The team was responsible for managing all service developments, working with a wide range of stakeholders and managing associated grants and contracts across the East of England.

The team was going to be affected by significant organizational change within twelve months, which would require new team structures, new systems and new ways of working.

The team leader, Rukshana Kapasi – an MBTI® practitioner herself who wanted to participate with her team – recognized the power and impact that the MBTI framework could bring to the period of transition.

Most team members were already familiar with their best-fit type and so the proposed development program could expand upon this knowledge. The team leader was very keen that the team be involved in the scoping of their own development, and this element was built into session one.

Business Challenges

- Improving communication
- Managing change
- Increasing influence
- Building resilience

Company Profile

Macmillan Cancer Support is one of Britain's largest charities, providing specialist health care, information and financial support to people affected by cancer. Its goal is to reach and improve the lives of everyone living with cancer in the UK, considering the social, emotional and practical impact cancer can have, and campaigning for better cancer care.

Macmillan Cancer Support

The program aims were to:

- Increase self/team awareness
- Explore the impact of personality on working relationships
- Find the best ways to support self and others through change
- Develop influencing skills
- Build resilience

Solution

Our consultants developed a four-session program. By the end of the first two sessions the team had embedded MBTI principles, completed the Step II questionnaire, received group feedback and identified their team type – which was ENTJ – along with strengths and blind spots.

The team decided on problem-solving and decision-making as the key focus for session three. Building resilience became the focus for session four.

Problem-solving with the MBTI tool

This session used the MBTI instrument, Z-model and Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats framework to practice addressing the organizational challenges and changes that were soon to become a reality.

One change the team would need to deal with was new geographic structures. A task using Macmillan data and resources was devised to help them work out exactly how they want to work together in the future. Insights from this included the clarity they would need in order to communicate changes to external stakeholders. This helped them to develop questions they would need to answer internally.

Organizational changes often bring uncertainty, and as a result, some team members wanted to focus on their well-being. To address this, we introduced mindfulness exercises to provide space for individual reflection and connection. They were very well received, and several team members wanted to continue with them after the team session. This tied in nicely with the final session in the program, which focused on resilience.

Solution

- Increase self-awareness at individual and team level
- How to solve problems and make decisions as a team
- Build team resilience

“ I now see the team using MBTI language in everyday conversation. We are much more aware of each other's styles and have noticed a very positive, mature attitude to the change process across the team.”

Rukshana Kapasi,
Senior Development Manager,
Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan Cancer Support

Building resilience with the MBTI tool

Individual team members explored their likely stress reactions – based on their MBTI types – and devised strategies to manage stress and build resilience. To help at a team level, the session looked at how a collective, challenging experience can really unite a team and bring it together. The team was given a case-study brief that required them to challenge and influence one another in a realistic working situation. By being able to try out new behaviors, they found that they built their trust and reliance on one another.

The program concluded with team members giving each other feedback, and reflecting on how the training will improve the team's development.

Results

Following up on team performance after the event, Kapasi reported, "I now see the team using MBTI language in everyday conversation. We are much more aware of each other's styles and have noticed a very positive, mature attitude to the change process across the team. I personally am using my knowledge of individuals' preferences when talking to the team about the changes we are going through, and being able to tap into others' ways of thinking has helped to make a difficult process easier."

During the event one team member said, "I have a much better insight into MBTI preferences than has been achieved in many years of my career and repetitions of the assessment," while another team member added, "It has massively helped me to build relationships within the team."

In a follow-up after the event, one team member reported: "I am incorporating mindfulness – or least, more 'mindful moments' – in the day to help in establishing some calm and considering how others will also be experiencing and managing stress in different ways." Another said, "My decision-making is clearer and more considered now. I am applying the six-hat thinking method and other decision-making techniques."

Results

- Increased self-awareness helps everyone understand what makes individual team members tick
- Learning different communication styles improves interactions in a dispersed team
- Increased trust between team members makes the team stronger, especially during times of change



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