



2010 WINNING CASE STUDY

Change Management in the Public Sector

Hay Group with Maidstone and

Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

HayGroup

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust - Transforming management and culture from board to ward

Executive summary

In October 2007 a damning report from the Healthcare Commission criticised Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW) for failing to deal adequately with outbreaks of *Clostridium difficile* infection. The report censured the trust's governance and management overall. The trust was failing to meet national targets and comply with core standards. The new executive team called in Hay Group to help them turn the trust's leadership and culture around. They knew what they wanted to achieve but were initially unclear about how to get there.

Hay Group proposed a solution that went beyond what was requested – offering a measurable leadership development programme integrated with organisational development plans that would clarify issues and priorities, engage leaders with the strategy and change their behaviour. Emphasising leadership impact over managerial skills and teams over individuals the programme helped transform the hospitals' culture right down to ward level.

With the help of Hay Group's specialist knowledge and fresh perspective, the trust has now turned around its management thinking, clarifying roles and responsibilities, ensuring accountability from board to ward, and agreeing a strong shared vision of how the components of the organisation should work together. The trust believes this approach to be the key to its current success and for its future sustainability.

A year on, the trust now has one of the best records for infection control in the South East; it is meeting national targets and standards on waiting lists and A&E waiting times; patient care has been dramatically improved and its underlying monthly financial deficit has been halved.

What was the problem/opportunity faced by the client?

MTW was an organisation under pressure. Following a Healthcare Commission Report (HCC) in October 2007 into outbreaks of *C. difficile* infections and the deaths of patients, the trust had been vilified in the press. It became a high profile organisation for all the wrong reasons.

While immediate action had been taken to correct the medical causes of the outbreaks, the report had also highlighted significant contributory problems of leadership and organisational culture:

“The lack of organisational stability, with numerous structural changes and a high turnover of senior managers, meant that managers could not settle into roles and focus on the key issues...

The development of managerial and leadership capability and capacity throughout the organisation should have been more of a priority... There was little delegation.”

Healthcare Commission report, October 2007

The majority of the board and executive team left the trust and were replaced by a new set of non-executives, an interim Chair and a new Chief Executive, COO and Director of Nursing.

The new Chief Executive and other board members were conscious of the need to address these issues alongside other actions required to embed the changes effectively to deliver quality healthcare for the future. Essentially it was vital that new leadership capabilities and a new culture were established 'from the board to the ward'.

Brief project background

As part of developing a turnaround plan, the new CEO and COO, supported by HR, wanted to address the issue of leadership capability and culture throughout the trust. They recognised that the personnel and system changes they had put in place, and their intensive drive to implement operational improvements were only sustainable if the culture and leadership across the trust were also "stepped up". Embedding significant operational change to deliver higher-quality services and performance needed a shift in leadership thinking and capability throughout the workforce to achieve several aims:

- Eradicate the "Millwall fan" culture ("no one likes us, we don't care") nurtured by the battering the trust had taken from the media
- Attract and retain better staff
- Clarify all roles and responsibilities and ensure everyone knows how the organisation should work
- Ensure patients are at the heart of what the trust does, so the organisation can respond quicker and more positively
- Overhaul the management culture to boost skills and confidence and enable managers to tackle existing and new challenges.

The Trust had requested two leadership interventions: for the board, and for the senior leadership team, mixing managerial skills with some leadership development. The new executive team also began to discuss a wider strategy for trust-wide development that would clearly link leadership development with the operational turnaround programme. They then went out to tender.

Hay Group strongly believed that the list of skills that the Trust had asked for would not lead to the step change needed. We proposed a solution that would change behaviours in the leadership population and engage them with the strategy. We also proved that we could measure the results.

"During the tendering process it was clear that Hay Group were the best able to help us and had the most relevant experience"

Glenn Douglas, Chief Executive

Consulting activity

Hay Group listened to the team at MTW but responded to the tender with an alternative solution which integrated leadership development with the trust's whole strategy and turnaround plans.

The programme would help to develop capability and culture *throughout* the organisation - rolling development right down the hierarchy from board to ward.

The approach was based on behavioural leadership that was specifically measurable and focused on the roles and leadership capability of the leadership groups as *teams* not just as individuals. Not only that, at all stages of the programme Hay Group flexed the approach and the content as the work unfolded and the real issues became clearer.

The purpose was also to lessen the attention to managerial skills (which can be gained in more traditional training) and focus more on the *leadership impact* that these key leaders can have.

Consultancy team

The intensive programme began in autumn 2008 and ran for one year with a team of six dedicated senior consultants under Director Phil Kenmore. Hay Group's team brought the following skills:

- Hands-on experience of working in and with the NHS to achieve organisational, cultural and leadership capability change
- An understanding of leadership at every level; how it differs between roles and the changes in personal behaviour needed to be successful
- Insight into how organisational cultures affect performance and how leaders' behaviour affects strategy execution
- Ability to challenge senior people who would be understandably reluctant at times to embrace change while bringing the large numbers of staff new to the organisation up to speed quickly and effectively
- Appreciation of what it felt like for the executive team to operate in the public eye
- Flexibility to adapt the programme to changing issues and time pressures.

“They spent a lot of time with me to understand the issues and really did their homework. They had a good balance of people with NHS experience, who talked the same language as us, but also experts with experience of other industries.

“We spend too much time reinventing wheels; we delude ourselves that our organisation is facing unique challenges, but other organisations have had similar problems. Getting people in from Hay Group with that expertise was vital.”

Glenn Douglas

Actions taken

Leadership development was based on a model looking at all the levers that drive change:

- Values and culture
- Management processes and systems
- Organisational, team and job design
- Work processes and business systems
- Individual and team competence
- Reward and recognition

Integrating the various strands of activity together towards stated goals ensures the board and executive have a single model within which to monitor progress and frame further development.

Leadership development work used an integrated approach across four levels of the organisation: the board, the executive team, the senior leadership team reporting to the COO and the operational division senior managers. Each level had common elements woven together – especially around culture, strategic objectives, ways of working and leadership impact – as well as elements that addressed particular issues in their group.

The executive and senior leader levels, for example, spent time measuring and reviewing their collective and individual leadership impact and accountabilities as a team. They were challenged to take responsibility for the changes they thought should happen to ensure better patient care. Hay Group convinced them that passing everything back up the chain was no longer an option.

Middle leaders focused on how they behaved as individuals and what their leadership role meant for them – for example as a clinician stepping into their first wider leadership (matron or clinical director) role. Members of staff at this level make up the engine room of the organisation and helping them to understand how they could improve performance on the front line was key to the trust achieving its turnaround plans.

“Hay Group's input has been really enlightening. It's clear now that the climate I'd been creating in my team hadn't been good. I can now see how to make people flourish and this is making the service better. People are becoming much more passionate about their jobs and this is having a really positive impact on the service we offer our patients.”

Paul Sigston, Divisional Director of Planned Care.

Success factors and challenges

- Hay Group helped MTW to identify its underlying cultural issues and turn them around – people are starting to like the organisation and believe that the leaders *do* care.
- A clear vision and strategy have been established across senior leaders and those below them.
- Clinical leaders and divisional managers are much clearer about their roles and responsibilities and how these fit in the wider organisation.
- Management culture is being transformed with less silo working, better delegation and more access to top leaders.
- Members of staff at all levels are more motivated and believe they have the power to effect change.
- Divisions are clearly focused on quality and patient care.
- Significant achievements have been made in infection control, with *C. Diff* and MRSA rates now among the lowest in the South-East.
- Compliance with the A&E wait of four hours has been 98.9% for the year to date, compared with a national target of 98%, and cancelled operations are down from 2.3% to 0.8% – the national target.
- The trust's underlying financial deficit has been halved and it is well on the way to its stated objective of being in recurring balance for the final quarter of the financial year.

“We set a lot of mechanistic targets: all of these have been met. We are delivering far better than before on all sorts of organisational issues. But the hardest thing to measure is culture change – and we have achieved this too.”

“There were times when we all had our wobbles, but we've learned that if you persevere and keep to the principle it comes good. What we've gained is confidence, self-belief and ability.”

Glenn Douglas

The client/consultant relationship

Hay Group was always clear that we were advisers to them not just delivering a programme and we helped them to understand that we truly wanted them to succeed.

“I was convinced that Hay Group were as committed to the success of this organisation as I am. I felt extraordinarily supported, involved and consulted with. The programme was flexible enough that we had many opportunities to tweak it when we needed to. Hay Group started by leading 100 per cent of the programme: now, after the transfer of skills and confidence, we're doing it ourselves.”

Glenn Douglas

Hay Group developed relationships at every level and allocated a named senior lead consultant to each level so we really knew what was going on. We were open and honest with them. We were persistent, we listened carefully to feedback as it came, we took it on board as soon as we could, we constructively challenged and we didn't back down.

“When the consultants had to give difficult feedback, they always did it in a way that built up our confidence rather than destroyed it. You wake up in the morning and it feels like a different organisation. Senior leaders are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have the tools to do the job and have a can-do attitude and a way of thinking that is open to new ideas. They are confident individually and collectively to face challenges now and in the future.”

Glenn Douglas