

This issue:

Communicating
Change

Making
Projects
Work

Achieving the
Training

Customer
Service

Diversity
Conferences

PSP
News

A one stop shop for training and consultancy services for the public sector

September 2005

Public Sector Providers

Health Inequalities - Modest Progress

Action to reduce the inequalities in health between groups of people is delivering results in some of the gap areas, but not in others. A report from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister focuses on the steps being taken to narrow the health gap by improving the health of the poorest fastest.

This newsletter is brought to you by
Public Sector Providers Ltd.

Our aim is to help public sector bodies achieve their aims by learning from each other and from us.

We offer:

- A one-stop-shop of **high quality training and consultancy services** dedicated to the public sector;
- **Conferences** of topical interest to the public sector with high profile speakers and practical workshops;
- This **newsletter** dedicated to the needs of the public sector (free of charge).

Visit us at:

www.publicsectorproviders.org.uk
email: info@publicsectorproviders.co.uk
or phone: 0845 658 5717
to find out more!

If you have colleagues who would like to be added to our mailing list, or if you would like to be removed from our list, please email us at info@publicsectorproviders.co.uk.

There has been a narrowing of the gap in death rates from circulatory disease, and improvements in death rates from cancer. There has been almost a 10% drop in the rate of under-18 conceptions from 1998, and from 1994 teenage conception rates in the most deprived top tier of local authorities fell faster than in other areas.

The life expectancy and infant mortality gap has widened. The relative gap in life expectancy between England as a whole and the fifth of local authorities with the lowest life expectancy has increased, continuing a long-standing trend. For males the relative gap increased by nearly 2%, for females by 5%.

For infant mortality the figures show a continuing trend towards a wider gap between 'routine and manual' groups and the whole population, although there have been year-on-year fluctuations in intervening years.

The report sets out a commitment to reduce health inequality and to give a new emphasis with new targets, particularly around cancer, cardiovascular disease and smoking.

Making Diversity Work in the Public Sector

Two exciting and practical conferences on this crucial issue are offered which will help you to implement actions which will achieve:

- improved performance and motivation of staff;
 - better understanding of customer needs and how to meet them;
 - improved access to more appropriate services;
 - legislation compliance;
- and much more!

See inside for details

We specialise in providing efficient, innovative solutions to create functional & effective communications

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www.publicsectorproviders.org.uk

>Welcome!

Welcome to the third issue of the Public Sector Providers newsletter, and our enormous thanks go to those people who contacted us with feedback about the newsletter. In particular, to Rebecca Evans, a Human Resource Consultant with Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, who wins our prize draw of a bottle of champagne!

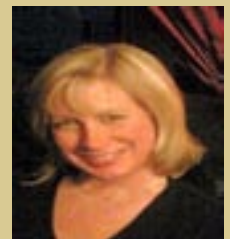
In this issue:

We're really excited about our forthcoming Diversity Conferences! We wanted to bring to you the top speakers in this field, and when you see the line-up, you'll see that we succeeded. The conferences have a practical feel about them, with high profile keynote speakers interspersed with workshops on how to implement best practice in this most crucial of areas. We hope to see you there!

Also, we have articles of, we hope, practical relevance to you, including how to communicate change effectively, some useful tips on making projects work, ways to ensure that you get the best possible return on any investment in training you make, and the importance of leadership and professional teams in providing excellent customer service.

Please enjoy the newsletter with our very best wishes,

Jane Hutton
Managing Director,
Public Sector Providers Ltd.



Milestone



Milestone is the specialist project and programme management solutions company. We are able to offer a tailor made suite of applications incorporating the Primavera Product range to address Best Practice, Management of Risk and Prince2. We are also able to advise on requirements for the National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT).

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Milestone Ltd

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Communicating Change

Change is inevitable (except from the ticket machines on the underground, it seems!) and it can be good or bad.

In a world of ever-changing goal-posts and the inevitable re-organisation that comes with it, change is a fact of life in the public sector. The knack is to maximise the good bits and minimise the bad bits. Presumably the main 'good bit' is that your organisational structure will be better aligned to the demands upon the organisation as a whole. (If it isn't, why are you doing it!?)

One of the worst 'bad bits' is the uncertainty that can be generated in staff when they know that change is in the air but don't know what the real story is: by far the best way of dealing with this is to tell them what's going on.

That way you reassure staff and you quash the rumours...

... and if you're going to tell them, the best way to tell them is face to face.

You won't be able to give them all the facts and figures (have hard facts to hand to be given out on a single side of A4 if necessary – carefully written!) but what you will do is gain all the benefits of personal input and trust - such an important commodity these days

When you do have your face-to-face meetings, and you stand there, ready to present, you've got three things that you need to communicate and just one golden rule to help you do that.

The former are:

- the problem(s) – what it is that means the change is necessary;
- the alternatives – the different ways you could change; and
- your decisions (assuming you've got that far) – how you will change.

Now for the golden rule:

“Making a presentation to people isn't about telling them what you know. It's about telling them what they need to know, in the order they need to know it.”

It sounds simple but it isn't all that easy in practice. For example:

- you need to figure out where your audience members are starting from: they may all be starting with different assumptions and models of the world in their heads – in large organisations such as in the public sector this is almost inevitable because of the breadth of experience they will have;
- you need to present the facts and figures in a way they'll all understand - otherwise you haven't actually communicated anything and to make matters worse you've alienated people along the way;
- you need to take them through the necessary decisions in a clear step-by-step way, remembering that people can't cope with more than about three concepts in a single presentation - just give them what they need.

One very useful tip is to remember to give them the overview before you start with the details. After all, you'd start with the corner-pieces and then the edges of a jigsaw, wouldn't you? Furthermore you'd expect to actually know what the picture was before you tried to put it together – in the same way, staff want to know the big picture before they try and fit all the facts together.

Putting things together before you know what you're trying to build is just asking for things to go wrong. Once something's been put together wrongly (Murphy's Law says that some of the pieces will fit together, they'll just be the wrong ones!) it's a nightmare to take them apart again before you can start to put them back together again....

It's all common sense - but only if you remember that golden rule: it isn't about what you know, it's about what they need to be told - telling people about change isn't about "you speaking"; it's about "them hearing".

by Dr. Simon Raybould



**When I said a hot presentation,
I meant make it snappy!**

▶ Making Projects Work



Why is it that so many of our projects take longer than expected, exceed budget and deliver poor outcomes?

It's becoming increasingly obvious, especially in complex organisations, that one overriding issue consistently sabotages our attempts to work effectively.

What causes problems?

Around any project meeting table are likely to be team members from a wide range of disciplines. A hospital trust may have physicians, nurses, accountants, HR, engineers. These people work in different ways! Often they use different words to mean the same things. They make decisions based on different values and have different constraints.

Over and above all this, they work for large departments that compete with one another for status, resources and power.

There are two ways that this can be addressed. Firstly, with effective Programme Management and secondly by working effectively in project teams.

In this article, we've focused on the second issue. We'll focus on Programme Management in a later issue – but do get in touch with us – we'd be happy to share our experiences!

What can we do to make individual projects work effectively?

A solution looked to by many

We have to delete all the cookies to speed up the project computers...

organisations is to train people in project management skills. For aspiring project managers, this is vital. But sending managers from other expert disciplines to these courses, although seemingly a simple solution, may miss the point: we need good processes, systems and tools, but what we need even more is better team behaviours.

A development programme that hit the real issues

A national Museum (The Natural History Museum) recently created an excellent new programme to address this issue. Within the Museum at any one time there are many projects running, to develop new exhibitions and refurbish the facilities. Project teams tend to be a heady mix of operations, engineering and curatorial (and scientific) people. Also at this time, a new Museum-wide project approval and prioritisation process was about to be launched.

Crucial to success of the programme was the clear definition of the objectives. It was not designed to educate staff in the principles and techniques of project management. Rather, it focused on ways to enhance collaboration, build a desire to work to shared goals and understand other functions' ways of doing things.

To make it relevant, a project simulation was designed – a typical Museum project that would be topical and controversial

– with milestone decision points that sub-teams were asked to address.

This generated a massive buzz of debate and argument! Of course, this is what often happened around any project table. The difference was that in this environment, the facilitators were able to stop, feedback and focus the groups on the real opportunities of truly listening to others' views and reaching a solid consensus, based on project goals rather than departmental interests.

Secondly, it helped them to understand the roles and authority of teams, project managers, line managers and approval bodies. This was a true revelation for some, who'd been grounded in inter-department rivalry for so long.

Thirdly it helped them understand and commit to working with the new Museum Project Process.

The success of this approach is borne out by quotes from team members:

"I've realised how insular we are in our area – and there is a good mechanism for changing that"

"We've had very little structure in the past – this will help greatly"

"It put my project into the wider Museum picture"

by John a Faulkes

Eight Ways to get the Best Return on Your Investment in Training

Getting a sense of the return on your investment in training requires commitment at all levels.

If you really want to make a difference then it is vital to prepare for, support and follow through the implementation of learning which comes out of any training courses. It takes individual time and commitment to set actions, review progress and then to link that back to impact on the performance of the individual, team and organisation.

It also takes time and effort to support people in making healthy changes to their behaviour – without that support individuals will say ‘why bother, no one cares’ and the value of the training will be lost.

Here are some tips to ensure you are doing the best to make the greatest return on investment in your training:

1. Do a needs analysis – at the initial stage this needs to be an ‘organisational’ or ‘team’ analysis and to look beyond training. The solution may be something completely different, ie a working group to develop more effective processes/procedures.

2. Set clear, measurable outcomes – whether it’s for training or for something else. If you don’t know what it was you wanted to achieve then how will you know whether you’ve achieved it? If you believe a training course will meet your need then think about how you will identify the impact in 3-6 months time.

3. Do a Training Needs Analysis – if the organisation/team analysis identifies a true training need then complete a needs analysis to identify what the learning objectives and content of any training course will be. Design the course to meet these specifications.

4. Invite delegates – make sure that all delegates know why they are there and the benefits of attending. And make sure they are invited in plenty of time – 24

hours notice gives the wrong message. Use this invite as a way to ‘sell’ any compulsory/mandatory training courses – think ‘How to Work Safely’ rather than ‘Health and Safety Training – All MUST attend’. Copy managers into the joining instructions/invitations.

5. Brief managers – all managers should know what training their staff are attending. They should hold 1:1 briefings with their staff prior to any training to discuss the benefits of the course and what each participant would like to achieve.

6. Brief delegates – ensure that all delegates attending have had a 1:1 with their manager and understand the importance of this. Make sure they are clear about what they want to achieve personally. Make sure that they have noted their personal objectives and are ready to share them at the beginning of the workshop.

7. Post-course de-brief - ensure that managers and delegates meet after the course to discuss and agree action to implement the learning back at work. This meeting could also include discussing the impact of the learning to the team and organisation. Doing this means that you are already setting up a method to identify the benefit of the training.

8. Follow-up 3-6 months after the training – the greatest qualitative measure of the return on investment is gathering data on what is being done some months later. What changes have been made? How has the learning been applied and what impact has this had on the individual, team, department and organisational performance? Some of this takes time, but if you’re serious about finding out the real benefits of training then asking people how they’re applying their learning and what the impact has been is vital.



Quick Quotes

“The world is full of willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.”
- Robert Frost

“Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can’t lose.”
- Bill Gates

“A country’s greatness should be based on how well it cares for its most vulnerable populations.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

“Some of the world’s greatest feats were accomplished by people not smart enough to know they were impossible.”
- Doug Larson

“What luck for rulers that men don’t think.”
- Adolf Hitler

Getting a good return on your investment in training probably has less to do with mathematical calculations and more to do with providing an environment which is supportive and challenging – enabling and encouraging new learning to be applied back at work and then asking the question: ‘What has been the impact on my job/team/organisation?’

By Sharon Langford

Customer Service - the importance of leadership and professional teams



In almost any setting good customer service can make the difference between success and failure. Badly resolved complaints will lose custom and reputation for any organisation.

Public sector bodies don't generally want their reputation to be built on how badly they deal with things, but need to be more than 'run of the mill' if they are to be memorable for the right reasons. Their customer service – the way they deal with people, the rapport they build – needs to be startlingly good.

What about when people don't have a choice, or when the choice is to take it or leave it? The customers of those services don't have much power, except perhaps to be unco-operative, which makes the whole experience more unpleasant for both the customer and the staff. If they complain that takes more time to deal with, because of the regulatory frameworks in the public sector.

But quite often people at the front line of the organisation don't feel like offering good, imaginative service, or they don't

feel that they can. Perhaps the message they hear from the manager is to 'do more, more quickly'. Perhaps they are full of uncertainty about what the future holds, or about how important the organisation thinks their work, and hence they themselves, are. Perhaps they work in an environment where they have to co-operate and collaborate with many others, who may have 'can't do' restrictions or mind sets.

I recently worked with a big public sector organisation which was aiming to combine its services for a certain group of people with those provided by a complementary organisation.

The leader of this service is a big figure – he's committed to providing an excellent service, and he walks his talk. He is visible to his staff, everyone knows who he is and most have met him. In fact he's so committed that he wanted the merged services to happen before the actual merger.

That's fine, except it meant that everyone had to bend the 'rules' just a little bit more than anyone had ever done before, and to do this without a nice clear chart of what this new merged organisation was to look like, who would be managing them and whether they will have any more resources to offer to people.

Staff assumed that any resource or bureaucratic difficulties they had had to work with in the past would continue, and they would be doomed to carry on providing what was basically an inadequate service. They didn't hear the exhortations to build change into the business plan, but carried on believing things wouldn't get any better.

I was asked to work with the managers of the teams, and the teams themselves.

They shared many of their teams' reservations – what would their jobs be in the future? What kind of authority would they have? What lines of accountability?

I couldn't answer those questions of

course. But my aim anyway was to equip them to go forward whether or not they had the answers. My work focussed on vision – their vision for the future of their service, and the importance of the leader carrying this vision, and repeatedly making the links between what staff do and the longer term vision. We used techniques like drawing, storyboarding and future pacing, new for them but which they have since begun to use themselves.

By the end of the day, they had begun to acknowledge their position as leaders and wanted to move their teams forward.

These leaders acted as partners in my work with their teams. The challenge with these 'teams', which were made up of different professions, from different organisations, was to move from an unproductive, 'unloved' position in which people, to different degrees, acted in opposition to each other or with rigid boundaries to what they considered to be their roles, to a position where team members committed themselves to making things better, and to doing whatever was in their power (with a significant increase in what they considered to be 'in their power') to improve the service they offered.

The path of service improvement once people want to do it, is fairly well trodden. It's the first stage, the wanting that is the challenge. The key factor with these teams was the belief change that happened – from believing that they were stuck, due to inadequate resources, and the failure of 'the bosses', to enthusiasm to work in ways they never had before, to make a difference.

This was achieved – to different degrees with different teams, but in every case the teams developed a much more positive attitude, and took an active role in their business planning, which they hadn't all been doing before. They accepted the future was theirs to make, so they began to get on with it.

by Naomi Crosby

CONFERENCES:

Making Diversity Work in the Public Sector 2005

When it comes to achieving equality in public sector organisations, we usually know what we have to achieve, and why we have to achieve it - but often we struggle with how to achieve it.

We have brought together top experts in this field to help public sector bodies understand the practical actions which can help us to move forward on this simple, but very complex issue.

High profile keynote speakers combine with practical workshops and networking opportunities to maximise the learning.

Keynote speakers:



Lord Herman Ouseley
former Chair of Commission for Racial Equality



Surinder Sharma
Equality and Human Rights Director, NHS



Allan Pease
Author of "Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps"



Loraine Martins
Head of Diversity, Audit Commission



Jane Nokes
National School of Government

Workshops (delegates can attend two):

Community Consultation

We know we should consult, and we try, but how do you ensure you gain views which are representative? And what about the so-called "hard-to-reach" groups? And just which methods are the most effective? This workshop explores those questions and more.

Dealing with Harassment

Harassment is a sensitive subject - whether someone is harassed because of race, disability, sexuality or whatever, emotions often run high. This workshop explores how to deal with this very difficult issue.

Turning Good Policies into Good Practice

Writing the policies and action plans is challenging enough, but ensuring that staff implement them effectively and consistently is another matter altogether. This workshop looks at ways to make it happen.

Managing Diverse Teams

Treating everyone the same won't work, because we're not all the same. But how do you manage and develop people as individuals without causing resentment? This workshop explores practical ways of addressing these issues.

Providing Accessible Information & Services

How do we ensure everyone can access the information and services we provide? What about websites, marketing material, ways of delivering services? This workshop explores ways to make services more accessible to more people.



Programme (Harrogate):

- 9.30 Welcome (Jane Hatton)
- 9.45 "Diversity Excellence Model" (Jane Nokes)
- 10.45 Workshops (see left)
- 11.30 Coffee
- 11.45 "Making Diversity Work in the Public Sector" (Herman Ouseley)
- 12.30 Lunch
- 1.30 "Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps" (Allan Pease)
- 2.30 Workshops (see left)
- 3.15 Tea
- 3.30 Plenary
- 4.30 Close

Programme (Birmingham):

- 9.30 Welcome (Jane Hatton)
- 9.45 "Making Diversity Work in the Public Sector" (Herman Ouseley)
- 10.30 Workshops (see left)
- 11.30 Coffee
- 11.45 "Diversity and the Health Service" (Surinder Sharma)
- 12.30 Lunch
- 1.30 "The Journey to Race Equality" (Loraine Martins)
- 2.30 Workshops (see left)
- 3.15 Tea
- 3.30 Plenary
- 4.30 Close

£275 + VAT per delegate.

Places are limited on both conferences. Contact us for a brochure now!

Making Diversity Work in the Public Sector 2005 CONFERENCES

18 October 2005
Majestic Hotel
Harrogate

3 November 2005
National Motorcycle Museum
Birmingham

Contact us for a brochure - now!
Email: info@publicsectorproviders.co.uk or 'phone 0845 658 5717



PSP News

Public Sector Providers (PSP) was formed to work exclusively with the public sector, because we strongly believe that this is a unique sector with shared, but unique needs. Our services (all aimed at achieving shared change through powerful learning) include training, consultancy, conferences and, of course, this newsletter! All of our services are delivered by Associate Consultants who each have an extremely high level of competence in their chosen field and also have experience of applying that expertise within the public sector environment.

Much has happened since our last newsletter, some of which we thought we'd share with you!

New Consultants

We now have around 40 Associate Consultants. Each one has been chosen for their proven expertise in their own field, and for their ability to apply that expertise effectively within a public sector environment. Some have worked within the public sector, as employees, and some have acted as external consultants supplying the public sector. In most cases, both apply! They deliver our services, either individually on smaller contracts, or in specially-chosen teams (bringing together complementary skills) for larger contracts.

New Staff

To manage the growing number of contracts we are delivering, and arrange the conferences, and put together these newsletters requires a team of highly competent people! Our team has expanded to include Lisa, our new Admin Assistant, and Ian, our new Contracts Manager.

New Offices

To accommodate our growing team, we've moved into a new suite of offices - see our new address below!

Conferences

You will have read about our forthcoming Diversity Conferences in this newsletter. We are planning three series of conferences every year, held at a variety of venues.

March 2006 will see some exciting conferences on the theme of Leadership in the Public Sector.

Watch this space!

New Brochure

We have now produced a brochure, giving an overview of the services we offer. Please contact us if you would like a copy!

Public Sector Providers Ltd.
(Company no. 5304773)
Tel: 0845 658 5717
Email: info@publicsectorproviders.co.uk
Web: www.publicsectorproviders.org.uk
1st Floor, Copperbeech House
84 Market Street
Kingswinford
West Midlands
DY6 9LN

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Interested in connecting Communities?

Essential Logic have developed a framework for connecting local communities via the web.

The initial development was carried out for the Birmingham Community Empowerment Network, www.bcen.net, and allows them to not only fully maintain the site, but to set up micro sites for interest groups, Community and District Partnerships and customise them without any further expense.

For further information please contact:
Essential Logic Ltd on 0121 224 7870
or via email: sales@essentiallogic.co.uk
www.essentiallogic.co.uk