



# Values in Business

## 'XYZ' FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE<sup>1</sup> – A CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION CASE STUDY COVERING THE PERIOD MAR 06 – DEC 07

### General Outline

'XYZ' College is a medium-sized general further education college situated in the South of England providing post-16 education for a combined local city and adjacent rural population of 160,000 people. In March 2004, XYZ College failed an Ofsted inspection and was re-inspected in March 2006. Although improvements were evident, the starting point for the college to be able to demonstrate performance at least in line with national averages was low. In 2003/04 the year of the first inspection success rates for long qualifications were 39% compared with a national average of 58%. In 2004/05 success rates for these qualifications improved to 50% against a national average of 62%. The 2006 Ofsted re-inspection showed only a further 2% improvement for 2005/06 and, as a result, the college was put under 'notice to improve'.

### Challenges

Following the 2006 re-inspection, and now under 'notice to improve', the college completed a values survey across the whole staff to assess the culture of the organisation. The key messages from this were consistent with an organisation that had experienced, for a number of years, inconsistent senior leadership generally displaying a high degree of central control. The net result of this was clearly evident in the inspection, for example, under-developed quality assurance and self-assessment processes were compounded by a lack of accountability and ownership. The values survey painted a picture of a college staff with a desire to transform but stifled by a systemic culture of blame, work overload and a lack of staff recognition. The outcomes of the inspection emphasised the real need to strengthen curriculum management and during the summer of 2006 the college completed a re-organisation of the curriculum areas with this objective in mind. The values survey set in motion a programme to support cultural transformation - at its heart was a leadership programme designed to support distributed leadership, with individual leaders and managers creating a positive 'can do' approach and enabling individual staff to take responsibility and be accountable for their performance .

### Approach

Based on an elegantly straightforward strategic-thinking approach (i.e. 1. Where are we now?; 2. Where are we going?; 3. How do we get there?), the consultant, Principal and senior college leaders created a 2-year, 4-phase cultural transformation strategy consisting of the following key stages:

#### Stage 1: Discover genuinely shared core values

- College Values Survey conducted (May 06) using Richard Barrett's Cultural Transformation Tools (CTT)
  - Over 90% participation by college staff and managers
- Facilitated session run for College Management Team to feedback Values Survey data and agree an action plan for cultural transformation

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<sup>1</sup> 'XYZ' College has since merged with a neighbouring FE College. Formal permission to explicitly identify this College has not been obtained from the new Principal of the combined Colleges.



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- Decision made to create a cross-organisational 'Values Working Group' created consisting of staff and managers
- Staff development day used to vote for 5 brand new shared college core values. All sessions facilitated by volunteers from newly formed 'Values Working Group'

Stage 2: Communicate the new core values widely and frequently through the organisation

- New core values launched and communicated throughout organisation by the Principal
- Cross-college 'Values Working Group' launched by the Principal who gives her vision for the college and full personal support for the group's work
- 'Values Working Group' meetings create cross-college communication and feedback loops
- 'Values Working Group' focus on creating critical 'meaning' around the new core values through dialogue with colleagues around college.

Stage 3: Embed the new core values

- College & Senior Management Team Values-based Leadership & Team Development undertaken using powerful Leadership Values Assessment 360° feedback tool
- Middle Managers Values-based Leadership & Team Development (similar to above)
- 1-2-1 coaching follow-up support for college managers in helping them to 'live the values'
- Continued support for the cross-college Values Working Group
- Work with HR on embedding values within recruitment, selection, training, etc..
- Solutions Focused Coaching training provided for managers & staff

Stage 4: Measure success and build sustainability

- Re-audit college culture using the CTT Values Survey – Nov 07
  - Feedback Values Survey results to Senior Management Team
- Review & evaluate overall progress in all areas over previous 18 months
- Plan ahead for building sustainability into system
  - Complicated by imminent merger with another College
  - Make recommendations for follow-up work post-merger to provide continued support for former 'XYZ College' managers
  - Brief new Principal on previous cultural transformation work with recommendations for next steps

## Achievements

In November 2007 'XYZ' College was once again re-inspected by Ofsted. Having made significant progress in the intervening 18 months, on this occasion the college was awarded an overall 'Satisfactory' grade. Indeed, the senior management team were told informally that the college only just missed being awarded the prestigious 'Good' grade.

## Leadership

An outstanding and visionary leader who inspired and led her managers and staff from the front, the College Principal & CEO acknowledged the integral part played by the cultural transformation initiative in improving the college's performance by saying that this work had 'provided a far greater sense of unity, and a real focus around change'.



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