Office of the Future Project (OOF)

Project Objectives:

- Identify and optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of core processes
- Release significant staff time to focus on core business
- Strengthen its position in respect of future BIS reviews or initiatives
- Embed Lean principles and techniques to support a culture of continual, practical improvement

Strategy, Tactics and Skills (Our Approach):

Lean, Learn, Lead ™: this approach has been refined over many projects, and this project was no exception in that the approach was changed around to suit the client's circumstances. The Lean, Learn, Lead ™ approach usually blends an appraisal of efficiency opportunities (Lean) with the changes necessary to both leadership style (Lead) and the multi-skilling of staff (Learn). We firstly work with the top team, establishing the vision and objectives. We then adopt the classic approach of establishing the As Is and To Be states, assessing the size of the prize and determining how to deliver it. Instead we focused on upskilling the Executive Group, the Lean Team, the staff and subject matter experts on a combination of new techniques including:

- Lean principles and change management models
- 'Micro skills' which were demonstrated and practices by our own interventions
- Performance metrics and measurement regimes.

55% of the workforce have been involved in some review activity, which has created the energy for change from within and down the organisation and resulted in 11 volunteers for the Lean team. Early workshops identified 38 issues which were evaluated and developed into either Quick Wins or work-streams for further analysis.

We used this 'force from below' to help develop the Executive Group and then determine the appetite and capability to drive to a new To Be state. We worked extensively with the Executive Group to help them become a more self-aware and cohesive team. This involved us building their trust and included:

- One of our team, a qualified coach, held 1-to-1 interviews with all of the top team
- An anonymised paper was produced summarising the findings, issues and capability gaps
- We first observed, then facilitated monthly Board meetings, using live issues to moderate discussion and provide opportunities for in-the-moment feedback
- We demonstrated then encouraged practice of a series of micro-skills, such as soft contracting, positioning, fierce conversations etc.

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This has been a significant step for the client; this is their first experience of using consultants as catalysts for them to develop their own solution. We are still involved and held to account, but in a more arms' length manner. This reduces the investment in consultancy, encourages the client staff to make their own decisions under our guidance, and puts the learning immediately into practice. Staff have reported improvements across the organisation in time management, meeting management and focus, improved contracting between stakeholders, and a greater understanding of where value is added.

In addition to working with the Executive Group the work-streams include:

- Funding Mechanisms
- Operational strategy
- Internal and operational communications
- Data collection and management
- Administration

These are being integrated into a change programme to deliver a streamlined and more focused organisation, where data is managed more effectively, the funding process maximises impact on the British bioscience community, and staff are empowered to deliver the right outcomes.

Results and Evaluation:

Huge energy created by our initial interventions, including a launch event. The client has identified to date savings of £50k on consultancy time from the way our Lead, learn, Lead approach has upskilled staff from day 1. There has been very significant buy-in and engagement to the process, which has created real momentum for change.

The target to free up 20% of resources to re-direct to priority projects looks to be on target, and there has been a significant shift in culture to a more focused and value-adding organisation.

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