

case study | The Colour Works

Background

The Colour Works was founded in 2003 in Bournemouth and grew quickly, taking on a number of associates from a variety of different backgrounds and spread around the country to deliver its learning and development solutions to its clients. A traditional “hub and spoke” model established itself whereby all operations – marketing and sales, customer relations, administration, product development, quality – were all firmly controlled by the centre, with associates bought in to assist with delivery when required.

Growth hit a plateau around the start of the financial crash of 2008 and it would have been easy to blame it on that, but MD Giles Miskin was convinced the fault lay elsewhere. Although the market was tough, the business had such a small percentage of the whole that massive opportunity for continued growth still existed.

The real causes of the stasis were lack of leadership (MD too busy in the business), lack of clarity around central roles and responsibilities and a faulty business model that created an exhausted hub (trying to cover all the bases), disaffected spokes (isolated and underutilised talent) and underserved clients.

Client needs

“For our team to be aligned to our company vision, values and strategy.”
 “To be sure that individuals understand their role in achieving team success.”
 “To improve levels of engagement in a geographically disparate team.”

Giles consequently worked with his direct employees to clarify roles and agree the strategy to change the business model, the central tenet of which was a re-engagement with associates.

The issue

Like the plumber whose tap at home leaks, we were at risk of preaching about the benefits of “team” without being able to achieve it ourselves.

But how can a “hub and spoke” model, with hugely talented and fiercely independent professional associates, become an interdependent team, motivated by a common vision, set of values and goal? And especially when we only manage to get full attendance at our team days 4 or 5 times a year?

The Solution

We therefore decided to run our own diagnostic – the Team Performance Indicator (TPI) – on ourselves to highlight critical elements of team-working in need of attention.

The results were discussed with the wider team and actions agreed to:

- Clarify the principal roles of the centre – lead generation, sales management, product development, CPD, back office support
- Share the vision for the company and agree the underpinning values that inspire us all to work in this area
- Pass the majority of centrally-held accounts to the associates to improve the understanding of client need and increase levels of client interaction
- Set up various communications channels to boost the sense of belonging and enable best practice to be shared

Improvements all round

The TPI was run twice more over the next 6 months charting our progress and each set of results scrutinised for improvements as well as blockers.

The clarity of roles at the centre has meant far quicker and more robust decision-making.

Using Simon Sinek’s Why/How/What model, we identified what knits us together and the values that are central to how we want to work, both internally and with clients.

Communication, not solely driven by the hub, is at an all-time high, with everyone prepared to ask for and give help when required.

Client relationships are longer, deeper and more transformational.

The breadth of our client offerings continues to grow.

Sales are over 40% up year on year.

Click [here](#) for our staged results

Testimonials

‘The changes the team have implemented around the results of the TPI survey have made the wider team feel far more connected to the organisation and have really galvanised us into action.’ **Ian Macknight.**

‘The TPI Created a REAL synergy whereby the sum of the whole really is so much more than the sum of each individual part. We are all prepared to challenge one another without fear of ‘treading on toes’
Helen Stephens – Facilitator.

‘The TPI helped deliver focus, clarity and encouragement, particularly in relation to what was newly-important to us as we re-structured the Associate and wider-commercial model. It started conversations that were key to our organisational needs.’
Howard Scott.

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