Incommunities Housing Association

## Developing the Leadership Culture – Case Study

Brief

Bradford based Incommunities is a Registered Social Housing Provider. The organisation manages and owns more than 22,000 homes, offering a range of housing options and services for local communities. We were commissioned to help the organisation to develop and grow ahead of competition from 47 others. Our practitioners were chosen for their "unique and individual" organisational development approach to transformation.

Our approach

Recognising Incommunities as an 'early adopter' of innovations in organisational development, we used our proven ICE 7Es transformation model (Establish, Explore, Envisage, Experiment, Embed, Evaluate and Educate) to support the organisation's and customers' growth over a three year period. With the housing market facing an unprecedented period of change, new ways of working, engaging and supporting new behaviours were needed to remain competitively feasible and viable.

Our core driver was to develop useful principles and methods which would create new 'business as usual' processes and behaviours, and support a learning culture where continuous improvement became the norm. Integral to our approach was the 'co-creation' of a development plan involving all stakeholders - particularly those who can say "no" to any change. New behaviours only become normalised and adopted if the team creates and owns the answers.

We have worked through the values and strengths assessment system (Talent Map) for the 7Es stages of our journey – developing a deep insight into opportunities and challenges, and assessing how things currently work when aligning values and behaviours.
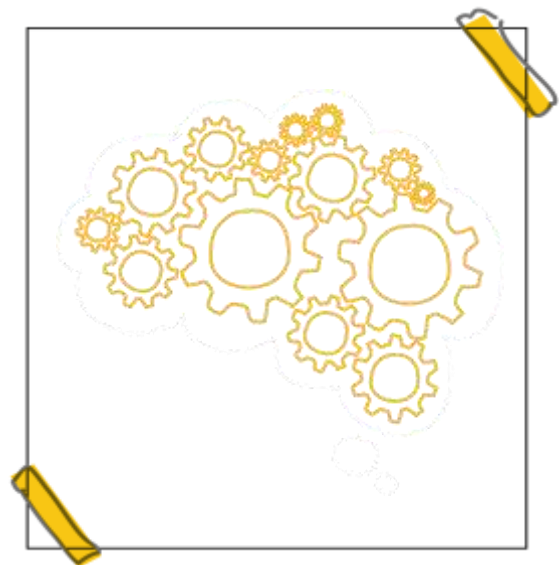
We have supported the executive team to identify and build their matrix of values bespoke to the organisation, whilst also determining the beliefs and behaviours that they expect in order to achieve their purpose.

The outcome of the creation of the values, beliefs and behaviours has been the creation of the **Building Blocks of Leadership,** which tells the story of behaviours and beliefs within the organisation. This part of the tool is based on the following model:
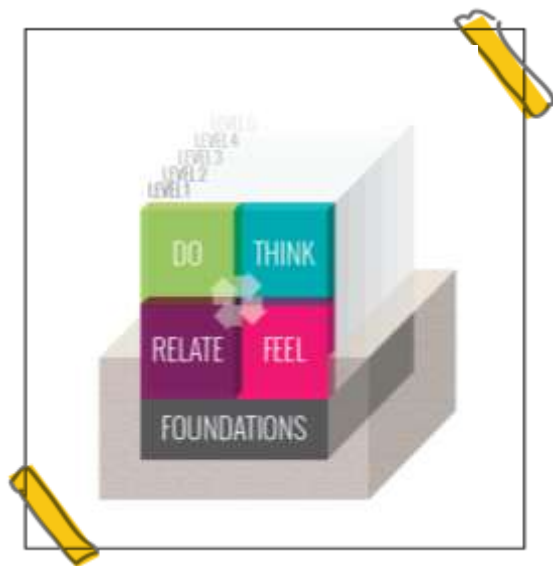
The do-think-feel-relate building blocks focus on the leaders and managers, building a set of characteristics and behaviours that are expected within the leadership community by leadership level. This model leans heavily on Jim Collins and his work "Good to Great" and "Great by Choice", which explore over two hundred of the world's most long-term successful organisations. Below is an explanation of each block, along with examples of the behaviours that underpin them.

Foundations – are the behaviours expected of all staff?

Do – this is what an onlooker sees in you, and may include things like:

Think – how the organisation's leaders think and solve problems.

Feel – how the organisation's leaders influence the feelings of others.

Relate – how the organisation's leaders relate to people and help people relate to each other.

Each building block is supported by the work that has already been completed to identify and agree the organisation's values, and we have tailored the building blocks and the questions needed for staff self assessment to Incommunities' requirements.

This has created a series of behaviours for each of the five levels of leadership, with each one building on the one before to create a pathway for individual development.

The Building Blocks of Leadership and values assessment have been crucial in the development and delivery of a multi-module training programme delivered to over 140 managers and leaders in the organisation. The Leadership Development programme has been created in 8 defined modules, covering the following areas:

1. Leadership 1 – defining leadership and management
2. Leadership 2 – introducing the Building Blocks of Leadership and their core principles to the organisation
3. Preparing for change – supporting leaders to understand and effectively plan change to achieve sustained results
4. Coaching – using this as the preferred leadership style to achieve optimum success
5. Positive conversations – understanding the difference between positive and conventional thinking in improvement
6. Difficult conversations – what makes a difficult conversation, when and why they are necessary and how to undertake them appropriately
7. Managing performance – supporting leaders to understand how to manage performance of both systems and individuals, and the importance of doing so
8. Leadership in action – taking all of the programme components and putting them into practice on a day-to-day basis

Outcomes

The success of the programme is evident across the organisation, with managers and leaders growing and building the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems and staff showing dividends in the overall performance of the organisation. The programme now runs on an ongoing basis to support the development of new managers and staff identified as possible future leaders.

Much effort has been put into determining the purpose of Incommunities' beliefs and behaviours, going deeply into the roots of 'why" they exist and linking this to their core values. The work was captured in the form of the following graphic visualisation, which has also been adapted into an animated presentation - both of which are widely used inside and outside of Incommunities.

For more information please contact:

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