



Leadership
DELIVERED

Northern Lighthouse Board Leadership Development

The Organisational Need

Following an organisational restructure and a comprehensive programme of process improvement, Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) wanted to ensure that the newly formed senior leadership team were enabled and empowered to lead and deliver sustainable organisational change. The Chief Executive wanted to harness the collective capability of his senior leadership team to lead and embed the changes within the organisation. The challenges being experienced in the organisation included:

- The formation of a new and extended senior leadership team.
- Significant personnel changes because of changes to the organisational structure.
- Unfilled vacancies emerging from the creation of new roles and changed roles as part of the re-structure leaving some departments without fully staffed teams.
- Transfer of staff to different departments and new lines of control, including engineering staff shifting to skills groups to facilitate technical competency enhancement and growth.
- The delivery of an extensive programme of process improvements beginning with Project and Programme Management and supporting Governance.

Leadership Aspirations

The senior leadership team identified the following themes as critical to their success:

- Greater senior leadership team involvement in setting the strategic direction of the organisation, enabling leaders to create a clear and direct line of sight between the strategic objectives of the organisation and measurable goals for staff.
- Working more effectively as a senior leadership team to better understand the impact of the changes on them, their departments and their people.
- Improved interdepartmental relationships and cooperation, and elimination of silos and blurred responsibilities.
- Leaders role modelling the organisational values and key leadership behaviours as the foundations for the future of NLB.
- Successfully communicating changes to staff and building commitment and buy in, thus accelerating and embedding the changes in the fabric of the organisation.
- For the senior leadership team to become a high performing team and to increase the consistency and quality of leadership across the organisation.

The Approach

The Houston Exchange partnered NLB in creating a customised Leadership Development Programme that would support the senior leadership team as they rolled out the change programme within NLB.

- The programme comprised four classroom-based modules supported by individual and group coaching. Each module was customised to include exercises and conversations on real time issues and challenges in the organisation which the senior leadership team could immediately relate to and act on following the training.
- Learning outcomes for the programme were co-created with the senior leadership team and were aligned to the specific leadership behaviours that would make the biggest difference to the achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives. The focus then was to ensure that there was a process for embedding learning in real work practice, by identifying workplace opportunities and activities in which the senior leadership team could practice their new learning.
- This was supported by coaching sessions designed to challenge the mindsets underpinning current leadership behaviour. The intention was to create higher levels of self-awareness, reflection, resilience, and focus. A key element of the training design was to focus leaders on finding ways to track and measure the benefits resulting from application of the learning.

This resulted in a development programme that:

- Addressed genuine business needs.
- Focused on the leadership capabilities shown to make a significant difference to performance.
- Identified and integrated real time organisation problems and opportunities into the programme content and coaching sessions.
- Supported changes in leadership behaviour by exploring resistance, and coaching for behavioural change.
- Identified ways of measuring the impact of changes in leadership behaviour in the workplace.

Outcomes Delivered

Evaluation data is still being gathered, and one of the senior leadership team has taken responsibility for tracking and measuring the return on investment from the programme. This will ensure an ongoing focus on measuring the return on this investment in leadership development. Improvements to date include:

- Leadership attention is now focused on building trust and psychological safety as key elements of creating an agile and sustainable organisation.
- A key element of the programme was each leader having a Climate (how it feels to work here) conversation with each of their team members. These were a catalyst in developing leaders' relationships with team members, and in co-creating plans for climate improvement. This has led to staff having more visibility about where NLB is as an organisation and feeling more informed and involved in decision making.
- Performance Management is now starting to be viewed as a key leadership accountability and conversations are now taking place in an open and honest way with care and candour, resulting in increased clarity for staff in relation to role and expectations.
- Leaders are adopting a proven change management process which provides consistency in change management across the organisation and supports the desire to empower staff.
- The senior leadership team are having more productive and open conversations resulting in greater collaboration and innovation, and more effective working across departments. For example, the Senior Leadership Team meetings are now more focused and punchier with only relevant and important information being shared; resulting in better quality decisions being made.
- Leaders are recognising and managing their own response to situations drawing on emotional models to be more conscious of their listening and questioning and are adapting their leadership style to enable team members to perform at their best

Next Steps

The Senior Leadership Team have identified ongoing areas for action to ensure that leadership improvements are sustained and further enhanced in the future, and these are:

- The senior leadership team are continuing their focus on building individual and team engagement across the organisation, and to keeping the momentum going in relation to collaborative working at every level of the business.
- Continue building on the initial success in sharing knowledge and ideas, breaking down silos, and working together to innovate and drive up efficiency and effectiveness. There is a strong desire to avoid any return to a silo mindset and the leadership team are committed to recognising and rewarding desired behaviours and calling out behaviours that are divisive or non-collaborative, either within the leadership team or in the wider organisation.
- Further refinements are to be made to the Performance Management system in a way that will embed both desired outcomes and behaviours and ways of working aligned with the NLB values. NLB want to give their leaders tools to help them: set clear and measurable objectives, drive up quality, encourage regular feedback. build capability and identify future talent.
- Ongoing leadership and team development opportunities to help the senior leadership community deliver on NLB's strategic objectives; and a date is already in the diary for a follow up session early next year.
- Continue the work that has been started in working towards making NLB a great place to work where everyone is motivated to contribute and achieve at the highest level, and where the NLB values are the cornerstone of employee attitudes, motivation, and expectations.
- Measuring climate improvement is also now a standing agenda item for the Senior Leadership Team Meeting to enable identification and tracking of actions relating to organisation wide climate improvement and engagement

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Working with us

We'd like to share the client's perspective on working with The Houston Exchange team, Catherine Thomson and Arlene Ward, and their view on the key factors that made the programme a success and that allows them to in their words "absolutely recommend" us was:

1. Their willingness to react and respond to the NLB's needs as clarity developed around leadership and organisational challenges.
2. Arlene and Catherine skilfully helped the leadership team recognise and deal with some of the more difficult and complex issues within the team.
3. The desire to ensure that module objectives and content were adapted in real-time to accommodate developing challenges and opportunities as they arose.
4. There was never any sense that they were just here to deliver a course, which was a real differentiator, and they truly became part of the team.
5. Dealing with an SME rather than a large corporate meant that the facilitation team on the ground were empowered; allowing them to be fast and responsive in anticipating and meeting our needs

" Today we had the final workshop of a year- long Leadership Development Programme for our Senior team. Thanks to Catherine and Arlene from the Houston Exchange for guiding us so well – we have learnt a great deal" Mike Bullock ,Chief Executive