

Case Study	<i>Cert IV Business Front Line Management</i>
Category:	ACT Government
Client:	ACT Government - Territory and Municipal Services

Background

The ACT Government Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TaMS) had recently completed a major restructure that included the amalgamation of a diverse range of ACT Government organisations. Some of these were: Action Buses, Capital Linen Service, Yarralumla Nursery and Roads. Significant strategic planning, HR and change management issues arose from the restructure.

The Opportunity

In order to make the most of the potential efficiency savings from the restructure, while still delivering quality service, TaMS executives wanted to find a way to get middle managers from these diverse organisations to experience the benefits of working together. TAMS Strategic Change Manager arranged with Bayley and Associates to deliver training in BSB41004 Certificate IV in Business Frontline Management for 20 TAMS supervisors from the various organisations.

TaMS management wanted the training to achieve:

- improvement in frontline management skill through learning, and
- the capacity for managers to build relationships and break down silos through networking.

The Process

After initial discussions on desired outcomes with the Strategic Change Manager, it was clear that as well as the learning benefits, TAMS wanted to offer valuable qualifications to their staff. The Bayley team then mapped the desired learning outcomes against various qualifications to select the most appropriate one, and then worked with the client to agree the best content and delivery method to deliver the outcomes.

Because the skills to be learnt as part of this program were intensely practical, we agreed with the client to deliver a year-long program with a one day face-to-face workshop held each month. This was to be complemented by support from participants' supervisors, including study time and advice.

Throughout the course participants would be required to observe, practice and be assessed using their new skills. The main benefit of this style of delivery was that it allowed participants to raise issues that were most relevant to their own workplace experience, to discuss these with colleagues and receive factual information from the facilitator. Importantly, workshop

delivery also offered benefits to TaMS as participants shared knowledge and built good working relationships with staff from different work areas.

To ensure management and participant commitment, the Bayley team facilitated an introductory session designed to build rapport and provide HR people, participants and their supervisors with a clear understanding of expectations and required commitment for the program. The participants came with a range of prior experience of study, self confidence, ages and work experience.

We used a number of facilitators with different skills to deliver particular workshops so that participants enjoyed the opportunity to work with the most appropriately skilled subject matter expert for each session.

The program was developed from commercially available materials, however these required significant tailoring to ensure that TaMS' chosen content was being delivered. One of the key changes to the materials was the development of 'tip sheets' that participants could take away with them and use in the workplace to help transfer learning. We also designed a number of TaMS specific learning activities based around actual workplace tasks.

The Challenges

After four sessions, some participants were falling behind with 'out of class' work. They weren't getting the necessary workplace support, as many areas were understaffed. Some were becoming concerned about their ability to achieve the qualification.

Bayleys redesigned the program to enable participants to complete more of the assessment activities in-class, using realistic workplace tasks. This minimised the need for release from work, and allowed participants to receive instant feedback from the facilitator. As part of this redesign process, the group decided that a good solution to some of these challenges would be to conduct in-class sessions at the various work places, where volunteer participants would co-facilitate and plan the activities for the day.

After the redesign, sessions were conducted at Capital Linen and Yarralumla Nursery. These provided interesting and realistic case studies on key program elements of Risk Management and Customer Service and allowed participants to see firsthand the work-based application of the theory covered in their program.

This part of the program was key to developing the participants' networking skills because they were able to share their on-the-job experiences and they could all offer something useful to each other. It also gave the program greater visibility with supervisors and managers, and generated significant interest from co-workers who were not part of the program. Greater respect for each other was a further benefit of the workplace visits.

The Result

From the original group of twenty, seventeen participants graduated, with one deferring to the next year and two needing to withdraw early in the course due to work and personal commitments.

Bayley consultants suggested that to demonstrate management commitment and support, the final part of the program should be a graduation ceremony – with supervisors in attendance –where the CEO

presented framed certificates. Graduation was a celebration of each participant's achievement. The organisation's PR team attended, and an article was subsequently published about the program's success in the staff newsletter.

It was clear that the group would benefit from keeping in contact after the program was complete. The Bayley team suggested and facilitated (at no additional cost) a two hour networking session in September 2008, hosted by one of the participants in their workplace. Participants were shown around the worksite; shared how they had implemented new skills and understanding gained from the course; and sought advice on workplace issues from their fellow participants. The group agreed there was great value in continuing the networking and agreed to take turns to host and facilitate a session every three months.

The program has sparked an interest in further study in some staff. One manager has been empowered by his success on the program to undertake qualifications in the Diploma of Project Management.

A number of participants have requested delivery of another program, as they have recommended it to their co-workers. This recommendation has been provided to TaMS management with a decision pending.

TAMS has benefited from identifying potential leaders who now have a much better practical idea of how to supervise and get the best out of their staff. Participants are utilising their newfound network. They are more confident in their frontline management and are more empowered to try new innovations. Some have received promotions within TaMS and some outside of TaMS. Some are taking on extra projects because they believe in what they have to offer their organisation.