

Identifying and Filling Capability Gaps

Description

Challenge

The Finance Officers at this very large client were responsible for extremely substantial budgets. In a time of economic uncertainty, it was more important than ever to raise the standard of financial management and ensure this group of people understood the financial implications of their decisions.

This group did not completely understand the significances of their how their actions were contributing to strategic financial management issues. Decisions were being based on misinformation, and a huge amount of time and effort were being wasted on processes that added little value.

The Finance Officers were a very diverse group consisting of several hundred staff members. For some, finance was a full-time role, others only had occasional involvement, and many discharged their responsibilities under sufferance. However, most had not received any formal training let alone being financially qualified. This, combined with inconsistent working practices, complex systems, and budgetary pressure, meant the need for efficiency was greater than ever.

Action

For such a broad audience, the challenge was being able to identify appropriate solutions for defined sub-groups of people. The client was aware that some of the solutions might extend to formal qualifications and some would already be available internally.

Working with key stakeholders from L&D and Finance, our team conducted a training needs analysis which consisted of:

- Stakeholder interviews and focus groups.
- Review of existing finance training materials available (including finance e-learning and systems training) and assessment of how they fit into the overall training needs of the Finance Officer group.
- Review the content of relevant qualifications, such as the AAT Bookkeeping Certificate and AAT modules, and assessment of whether they would be appropriate.

Our findings were documented in a Training Needs Analysis report and were also formally presented to the steering group.

Results

The scope of the Training Needs Analysis extended more widely than originally anticipated. A series of issues were identified and prioritized. The Finance Officers themselves were able to more clearly define issues so that existing and new guidance and training interventions could be better

communicated and signposted. A key output was the identification of capability gaps with associated development opportunities which allowed new, tailored solutions to be designed and successfully rolled out.

According to the client, our recommendations “were based on thorough analysis and were very positively received.”

Internal post-event evaluation processes confirmed that the new training (developed on the back of our recommendations) was contributing to better working practices and the strengthening of financial management processes.

Date Created

September 2018

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