



CASE STUDY

Cambridge City Council

February 2021

The Challenge

Cambridge City Council's vision is to upskill our management team to be knowledgeable, adaptable, and successful in manage their teams in a challenging environment. We have been through, and continue to embrace, a significant period of change. We need managers who will take ownership and responsibility for their actions and deliver positive outcomes within this changing and challenging environment.

To equip managers with suitable skills that support them in their roles we decided to engage with a training partner who could develop and deliver a tailored management development programme for our 80 first line and middle managers. The competencies and required learning outcomes have been built into six distinct one day classroom-based modules:

- 1. Leadership Skills and Qualities**
- 2. Managing your Work and Responsibilities**
- 3. Managing Change**
- 4. Performance Management**
- 5. An Introduction to Coaching and Mentoring**
- 6. Commercial Awareness**

It was important to us that the training provider was knowledgeable about the challenging and political environment we work in. We wanted to ensure that the programme aligned with our corporate plan, organisation strategy, vision, and would address feedback from our Investors in People audit and a recent staff survey. It was also important that the training team were experienced managers and trainers who could share their knowledge and adapt the training to the needs of any group they were training.

A procurement exercise was conducted late 2018. We were extremely pleased by Cosensa's tender and especially the presentation. The tender effectively met the requirements of the specification, demonstrating the skills and experience of the trainers and organisation. Consequently, Cosensa had the highest scoring tender and were offered the contract in January 2019. Work began from February, with training commencing from April 2019.

**"Brilliant trainer.
Really good
knowledge and
very personable"**

Due to the success of the management development programme, we extended Cosensa's contract into a second year. The events of the COVID-19 Pandemic meant that running a regular program did not seem likely for the 2020-21 financial year. However, in discussion with Cosensa, we were delighted to be able to explore an opportunity to do this in a virtual setting.

After discussions were made and agreements arranged, we had a schedule ready to deliver the developed programme online, between November 2020 and March 2021. At the time of writing, we are halfway through the programme which we have 27 delegates attending all six modules. The programme is being run via Zoom, with Cosensa providing two half sessions per module, for two separate cohorts. By the end of March 2021, Cosensa would have provided 24 online sessions for this programme. Cosensa has done an excellent job of moving the programme to the virtual classroom. They have adapted the way the training is delivered, with a particular routine of delivery in order to help us meet our scheduling requirements. So far three of the six modules have been run virtually and feedback has been very good.

The Solution

As a government organisation, the biggest impact usually occurs on our people. For us it's about changing the mind-set, culture and way of thinking of the middle and senior leaders within our organisation. Cosensa's team of senior training consultants and contract manager have worked in close collaboration with our organisational development (OD) team from the onset of the contract. The programme is being rolled out in four distinct phases:

1. Introduction and Diagnostic
2. Design
3. Delivery
4. Review

During the introduction and diagnostic phase Cosensa's team undertook key activities:

- Attending introduction and scoping meetings with our OD team.
- Conducting interviews with each of our Heads of Service discovering the needs of that area. This means the programme has been designed based on the feedback of the needs of the whole organisation.
- Reviewing and learning our corporate plan, organisational development plan, Investors in People report and staff survey results.
- Writing, implementing and managing a project plan. This included agreed milestones such as meeting dates, design deadlines, agreeing the training dates for the programme, booking the training team to agreed dates / subjects, and administrative tasks such as delegate attendance and evaluation updating. All milestones have been achieved to date.
- Designing and producing a corporate video for us to use to promote the Management Development Programme.

**Few have the
professionalism,
flexibility and the range
of interventions that Cosensa
Learning & Development offer**



The design of the six modules and an underpinning learning log was conducted by one of Cosensa's senior training consultants. Throughout the design phase updates were shared. We really appreciated the day we spent walking through the design methodology. We were also particularly impressed with the opportunity to run a pilot session where we could test run the modules and check whether they fit our needs and were fit for purpose.

It was important to us that the training was highly interactive and engaging. Cosensa's course design was grounded in shared learning principles and activities that support this e.g. group work, class discussion, games and behavioural self-assessments. The programme also includes supporting materials such as slide decks, workbook, handouts, pre course work and post course reflective practice. The design also links back to our behaviours framework for managers to ensure there is clear association with the learning and those expected behaviours.

Delivery of the training commenced in April 2019. Two of Cosensa's senior training consultants were allocated; Glynn Sixsmith-Hookings and Brian Grimshaw. It was important that all managers had the chance to participate in the full programme and to get a good return on investment. To this end training of each module was scheduled four days per month between April and November, then a full cycle run through of each in December and again in January 2020. To ensure consistency the trainers have conducted a Train the Trainer exercise for every module before delivery. There has also been shared review feedback from each trainer with our OD Team.

We have also been particularly impressed by Cosensa's flexibility in adapting the content of the programme. For example, when we were in module 2, we discovered we should include more content around our organisational policies, including how to deal with difficult cases involving the policies. The content of the module was adapted based on a conversation after the first run of that module.

Throughout the introduction, design and delivery stage the Cosensa team and our OD team have talked, met and reviewed regularly. To ensure consistency and high quality the Cosensa Contract Manager and members of our OD team have sat in to observe some modules. The first training programme was completed in January 2020. Following on from the success of this, we were excited to be able to provide another programme online for the 2020-21 financial year. Our online programme started in November 2020 and is still currently running now to great success. We have been really impressed by the application of Cosensa in having this programme available to current and aspiring managers this year.



**"This course
should be
mandatory
for all senior
management"**

The Outcome

Feedback from the managers and Heads of Service has been excellent. The programme has had a positive impact on teams and service areas. Managers were and are clearly engaged in the programme, and although attendance is mainly voluntary, a majority have now completed the whole programme. This was proved by the number of applications and interest we received for the online programme we are now running.

For the 2019-20 programme, 36 one-day sessions were run (six of each module). We had a total of 106 individual delegates which meant 406 attendances across 16 of our services. Some example feedback from this includes:

Brilliant trainer. Really good knowledge and very personable

I enjoyed this module and felt I came away with new knowledge and practical tips for managing change

*Trainer kept the group engaged and the right amount of interaction tools were used - not too much or too less.
I have already recommended to colleagues*

*Really impressed with the content and the trainer. There were lots of ideas to take back
to the office to improve the way we work*

*Used a range of approaches and methods which were thought provoking.
Gave physical steps to implementing initiatives*

There were areas I was struggling with and now I simply don't!

*I have learnt different ways managing staff even though I have
a team of 17 and I feel more confident going forward*

*I thought both trainers were very approachable and wise - they had a manner
which enabled you to feel confident in them*

Thanks so much - really appreciated the opportunity. I intend to make the most of it

We currently have 27 delegates from 11 Services attending our online programme for the 2020-21 financial year period. Attendance levels have been over 90% - we expect all 27 delegates to complete the programme. As we are only half way through the programme, we only have indicative feedback of what's been delivered so far. However this feedback has been very positive, some examples can be found below:

*Trainer Brian has extensive knowledge and works across this premise of bringing out
the best in all - yourself and your team*

Great course - thumbs up

Very informative

I have gained a lot of knowledge, ideas and tools to start to work differently and gain confidence in managing - time and work just as much as colleagues (in future). Brian allows for freedom of expression which really helps to facilitate ideas!

We have been told by Heads of Service that those who have already attended modules have implemented some of the actions and strategies within their teams, for example having more regular 1-2-1s and implementing performance feedback processes. Cosensa has helped us with analysing attendance, evaluation feedback, and have produced a management and delegate review questionnaire which is aligned to the competencies we wished to develop from each module of the programme. 'Investors in People' continue to recognise our commitment to the develop our managers within the council through our Management Development Programme.

Testimony

Working with Cosensa has been excellent. The team is extremely professional, timely and approachable. Any concerns or issues have been quickly resolved or addressed. We really enjoyed the flexibility, timely responses adjustments made and the overall proactive nature and positivity of the Cosensa team. The immediate offer of quarterly review meetings with the Contract Manager offers additional reassurance that we can meet and discuss in person the current progress, any challenges and the next steps for the programme. Cosensa's flexibility in adapting the content including learning objectives and outlines, changing content to our requirements where a need has become apparent, has been very helpful. Their flexibility with regards to rescheduling sessions, such as when there has been lower participation, has been exceptionally useful as well.

We have also been particularly impressed with the knowledge of the trainers in introducing various learning techniques and methods. The responsiveness of Cosensa for advice has been excellent. Personal one to one contact with the contract manager has been exceptional. Overall, we are very pleased to be working with Cosensa and up until now our objectives have been fully met. They have responded proactively to the last years events - providing a stellar online programme for developing managers, both current and aspiring. We are extremely pleased with the work we have been able to do with Cosensa and are looking forward to the up-skill in knowledge and practice as a result of this.

Contact Details

Name: Vince Webb

Role: Organisational Development Manager

Email: vince.webb@cambridge.gov.uk

Phone: 01223 458108

Name: Sean Rossiter-Johnston

Role: Learning and Development Co-ordinator

Email: sean.rossiterjohnston@cambridge.gov.uk

Phone: 01223 457935

