



## BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTHS AT A TIME OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

### CLIENT PROFILE

Between 2001-2010, the Learning and Skills Council (one of the country's largest Non Departmental Public Bodies, with a staff of 3,500 and an annual budget of £12bn) was responsible for planning and funding further education in England. In 2008, the decision was taken to wind down the LSC and restructure the provision of further education support in England. This led to the need to redeploy several thousand staff into new and existing agencies, with significant uncertainty as to where staff would end up and what they would be doing.

### OUR APPROACH

Strengths Partnership was approached by an HR consultancy to support a development programme aimed to boost morale, confidence and engagement during the transition period for all 3500 LSC staff.

It was decided that the programme's aim should be ***“to inspire individuals to take a proactive and positive approach to their future”***. Entitled 'MY Potential', full title 'Maximising Your Potential', the programme included the following core modules:

- **Module 1: 'Maximising Your Here and Now'**: an inspiring one-day event introducing core themes such as personal choice; control and responsibility; the exploration of key principles and takeaway tools from positive psychology; and a review of participants' Strengthscope™ reports and reflection on personal values.
- **Module 2: 'Maximising Your Future'**: a half-day event giving participants space for deep reflection on their personal journey in life to date, and consideration of their priorities for the future using a range of tools such as the 'Wheel of Life'.
- **Module 3: 'Maximising Your Brand'**: a half-day event focused on coping with change, building a personal brand and encouraging participants to consider how they make an impact in the short and longer-term when faced with new environments.

The Strengthscope™ questionnaire was opened up to all staff at LSC, so that each could receive facilitated feedback on their key strengths, strengths in overdrive and potentially weaker areas, as a means of identifying those areas of work which energised them the most and how they could develop these further. Strengthscope™ profiles were revisited at each programme module. In Module 2, this focused participants on reflecting as to their next



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career move and how they could ensure that they were moving in a direction aligned with their values and strengths. In Module 3, the focus was on how participants could communicate their strengths when meeting their new teams/new managers in a way which demonstrated value to the team and organisation.

A number of internal LSC staff were accredited to use Strengthscope™ in order that they could provide one to one feedback to individuals on an 'as required' basis. The accredited group included the entire 20-strong Learning and Development team, as well as a further 30 line managers who wished to provide support to staff going through the restructure by gaining greater insight into the tool and approach.

### OUTCOMES

Over a 5 month period, around 1000 employees attended this non-mandatory programme and reported some very positive feedback, samples of which are shown below:

“Seeing my strengths articulated on paper is extremely helpful. Reading my report I was able to recognise myself.”

“I have rarely found a learning event to be so powerful and to have so many applications both to work and personal life. My attention was held throughout the day and I came away with a number of actions. I was still thinking about the event days later. Thank you.”

“The whole series of workshops was the most useful personal development programme I have attended in 30 years of working life.”

“Overall energising – the sense that the organisation cares and has put this opportunity in place to support me through this difficult time. I feel valued and motivated in this awkward time by this.”

The programme was shortlisted in three categories for the Training Journal awards 2009. The main reason for the programme's nomination was that it was seen to be both well received in providing short-term support for employees through the machinery of Government changes, but also had significant impact on participants' health & wellbeing, confidence, mental fitness, relationships and their overall personal effectiveness.

We finish with a final comment from the HR Consultancy's programme manager on Strengths Partnership's contribution to the programme's success:

“Many thanks for your support, partnership and good humour in helping us deliver such a great programme.”

