

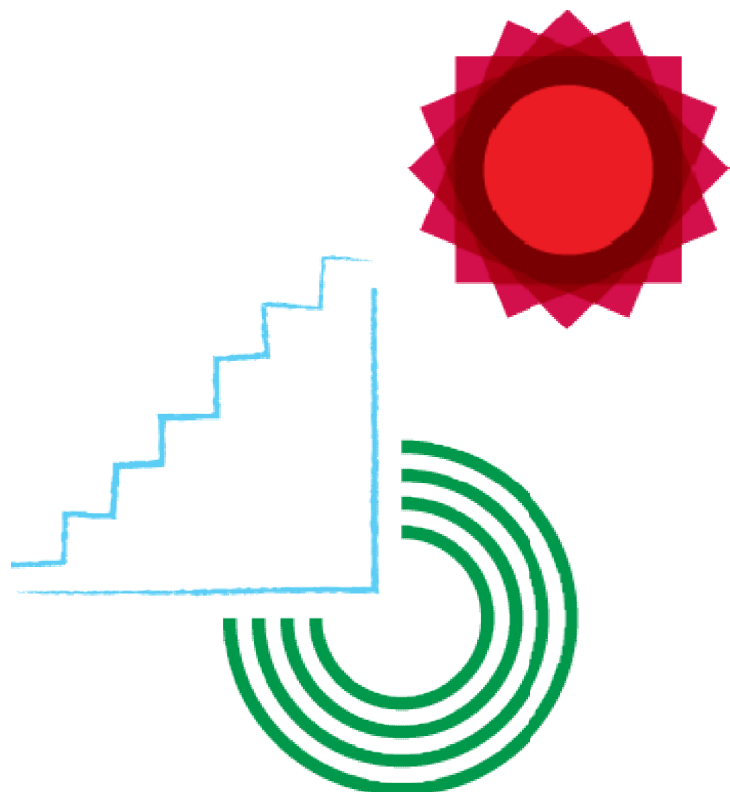


ENGAGE
FOR
SUCCESS

For more information about Staff Engagement at the CFO contact Eddie Bloomfield, Head of the Office of the Accountant General (eddie.bloomfield@justice.gsi.gov.uk).

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE COURT FUNDS OFFICE

Case Study from the Ministry of Justice



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE COURT FUNDS OFFICE



The Business

The Court Funds Office (CFO) provided an investment and banking administration service totaling £3.1 billion for over 145,000 clients whose money is held under the control of the civil courts of England and Wales, including some of society's most vulnerable people. The CFO handled a daily turnover of £5-7 million.

The CFO was working on an outdated IT infrastructure and in 2009 began a major business transformation programme to modernise the service it provides, as part of Transforming Justice, the Ministry of Justice's overarching change programme.

The CFO began to work closely with National Savings and Investments (NS&I) and this ultimately resulted in a decision to transfer all CFO's administrative functions to NS&I in December 2011 enabling the MoJ to provide a more modern service for its customers.

The Challenge

After almost 300 years operating from Central London the transfer of the CFO's back office functions to Glasgow was a historic milestone. Many of the staff working in the London office had been there for most of their civil service careers, in some cases over 30 years. This change meant the almost complete closure of the London office and reduction of roles from 160 to 11, with 116 of these roles being held by permanent staff just a year before the transfer.

Previous attempts to significantly transform the business had failed and as a result there was an element of disbelief that this programme was any different. In addition feedback from staff suggested that communications relating to the programme for change had been limited.

The 'how'

Eddie Bloomfield was appointed Head of the CFO in 2010 with a specific remit to oversee the transfer of work to NS&I and essentially to close the existing Court Funds Office. Under his leadership, the CFO adopted an approach which it subsequently found matched Steve Radcliffe's *Future - Engage - Deliver* model.

The leadership team developed and communicated a clear vision of the future comprising three high level objectives: to maintain operational performance, achieve a safe transfer of the service and look after the staff. It adopted an approach based on *look after the people and the work will look after itself*, and a communications and staff engagement strategy based on *'how does this affect me?'*

To begin this change the team asked staff what they thought about internal communications, and as a result profoundly changed how they communicated with staff. They ensured communications were open, honest, “with no sugar coating”, and through multiple channels. Regular, monthly, face-to-face briefings, presentations and Q & A sessions within 48 hours of each Board meeting, and at key points in the programme were supported by a factsheet, drop in sessions, suggestion boxes and notice boards on key topics. These gave staff up-to-date information and lots of opportunities to ask questions about the programme and how it would affect them. Staff Q&As were written up and published to all staff.

The CFO management team developed together a set of behaviours embedding the values and culture needed to support the successful achievement of the three objectives. Creating an environment where support for staff and mutual support amongst management was central to this. This approach was role modelled during the management meetings held at different levels of the management structure. The meeting structure was also reviewed and redesigned to a consistent format with members of the Management Board present at each stage, including attendance by Eddie to listen to staff and take part in the discussions.

In a response to previous engagement surveys senior managers took part in a series of back to the floor exercises, giving staff a chance to demonstrate the challenges they faced on a daily basis and to raise concerns they had. This enabled the team to address issues and misconceptions which were putting unnecessary pressure on staff, such as a belief vacancies as permanent staff moved on had to be left unfilled, rather than bringing in agency staff.

The CFO established a dedicated People and Change team to help maintain business by enhancing skills and development, and to take forward the change programme by providing a consistent level of support to individual staff and the management team. In addition, MOJ Corporate HR provided valuable specialist guidance throughout this process and the Trade Union Side was also fully engaged throughout the process. The team supported permanent staff in their search for new jobs, and decisions about whether to take voluntary redundancy.

The CFO managed its business by agreeing an end date for staff who decided to take redundancy to leave just after the point of transfer, and agreeing end dates for temporary staff on fixed terms also to leave just after the point of transfer. The CFO ensured regular use of recognition and reward for achieving business targets for permanent staff and agreed a similar ‘employee of the month’ scheme for agency staff with an award for the winner and certificates for all those nominated, so that the whole team could celebrate their achievements together.

The business outcome

At the point of transfer of the work to NS&I, staff had not only maintained business performance with all targets met but also ensured there was no backlog of work to hand over. A successful and safe transfer of the 145,000 client accounts was achieved and the operational business went live in Glasgow as planned.

So with two of the three objectives achieved, what about the third; 'to look after the people'. At the point of transition 77 permanent staff were still employed, of these 22 staff exited on voluntary terms (including retirement), a further 12 secured alternative roles (7 of which were in the new MoJ organisation responsible for the CFO – the Office of the Accountant General (OAG)). The remaining 43 were placed at risk. Of these 39 have secured alternative employment within the Civil Service or left on voluntary terms. The MoJ and OAG are working closely with the remaining 4 to secure their futures.

What did staff say?

Two months before the transfer, the CFO ran its annual Staff Engagement Survey. The CFO's results were extremely positive. The CFO's Employee Engagement Index rose by 5 points to 56 and the positive theme score for leadership and managing change rose 9 points to 63, 23 points above the level for high performing units across the Civil Service and 33 points above the overall MoJ score. Despite the fact that staff knew work was transferring and the office was closing, positive scores increased strongly for motivation and inspiration, and staff confidence was high that the organisation as a whole was being managed well. Positive scores improved for confidence in senior manager decisions, senior manager actions being consistent with organisation's values, work giving a sense of personal accomplishment, feedback improving performance, staff understanding of the organisation's objectives and purpose, and staff feeling valued and treated fairly.

Celebrating success

Ensuring that the staff were engaged, communicated with at every stage and able to voice their concerns, knowing that they would be listened to were key to the success of such a major change programme. To mark the efforts of all staff involved (both those still there and colleagues who had already moved on), a celebration event was held awarding staff with certificates of recognition from the Permanent Secretary of the MoJ. This gave staff the opportunity to be thanked for their efforts, but to also reflect on the achievements they had accomplished.

The level of commitment demonstrated by staff to deliver the business in a closedown situation was inspiring. It made all of us involved think that anyone in this situation shouldn't underestimate the dedication of their staff, and what can be achieved when staff engagement is given the focus it, and our people, deserve.

