

Developing a values-led culture at National Trust for Scotland

Background

The National Trust for Scotland is the conservation charity that protects and promotes Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy. With over 270,000 members it is the largest conservation charity in Scotland. It depends for its support on donations, legacies, grants and membership subscriptions.

Established in 1931 the Trust acts as guardian of the nation's magnificent heritage of architectural, scenic and historic treasures. As an independent charity, not a government department, it acts on behalf of everyone to safeguard Scottish heritage. The Trust is unique in that its activities cover the full range of the cultural, built and natural heritage. A key challenge is to make this relevant to the people of Scotland and all those who have an interest in Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Challenge

Early in 2006 the Trust faced several significant challenges – a loss on a number of high profile events designed to raise significant funds and the resignation of several senior managers including the CEO.

The relatively recently appointed Chairman of the Trust, Shonaig MacPherson CBE FRSE, wanted to launch a programme designed to engage staff and managers in a process of rebuilding confidence and morale.

=mc was asked to advise on how to drive such a programme and especially how to build an all-staff conference around values.

=mc's brief

=mc was asked to do three things:

- Advise on the recruitment and development of an internal change team – called *The Heart of the Nation*. Working with the Chairman and Director of HR we discussed what

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kind of people should be recruited to the team and what kind of work it should carry out to help engage this diverse organisation spread across many sites and disciplines

- Design and facilitate a values event at the all-staff conference at which the chair and senior managers would roll out their renewal plan for the organisation. This event was seen as being a critical point to engage and align staff after a difficult period of change
- Run a workshop for the board members and senior managers helping them to find ways to re-engage with the vision of the organisation, share ideas on how to tackle the challenges and communicate this to volunteers, staff and managers

“The National Trust for Scotland was delighted to call on the counsel and expertise of =mc – a company that understands our business and values.”

Shonaig MacPherson, Chairman, National Trust for Scotland CBE FRSE

What we did

In consultation with the Chairman and the HR director we helped design a programme of work to engage staff in the values programme. The Trust also undertook a significant number of initiatives itself.

Among the initiatives developed were:

- Design of the conference event based around five key values to explore what these would mean in practice
- Training for the senior team in effective working together – especially around bringing stability to the organisation at a time of change
- Use of a 360° assessment tool to establish key senior management competencies and development areas
- Briefs and recruitment advice for the *Heart of the Nation* team who led much of the work

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Result

As with many organisational development initiatives the results will most likely be medium to long-term. The values are in place to help unite the organisation at a difficult time.

But the trust has to move on now and look carefully at its business model and processes. This practical renewal is being led by a new high achieving CEO Mark Adderly, recruited from the commercial sector, who is bringing new discipline and rigour to all the trust's processes

Want to know more?

<http://www.nts.org.uk/> – for the home page of the National Trust for Scotland.

Or contact Will Campbell, Principal Management Consultant on 020 7978 1516 or email w.campbell@managementcentre.co.uk to find out how we might be able to help you.