

Academy Conversion

Steel City Schools Partnership



The Challenge

Background

Steel City Partnership Trust (SCSP) originated as 3 individual schools serving children in different communities.

Each school is a larger-than-average sized primary school, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average, and the proportion of pupils with disabilities and with special educational needs in one school is well-above average.

During the early stages of SCSP there were 3 separate Schools overseen by one executive Headteacher, serving children in different communities. The opportunity arose to create one entity, which was seized by the individual school governors. They wanted to drive forward outcomes for the children; the community and make SCSP a great place to work.

January 2012, saw the creation of a permanent partnership between all three schools. Later the decision was taken for all 3 school to amalgamate and become an Academy under the umbrella of Steel City Partnership Trust (SCSP).

Sheffield's HR and Payroll team have developed a meaningful partnership with Steel City Trust which is based upon trust, open and honest dialogue in a pursuit of Educational Excellence, recognising the needs of the wider community.

All three schools have been supported by Capita HR staff for many years, during which time both parties have moved from a customer supplier relationship to a partnership approach to their way of working.

This has come about through a genuine desire to understand the customer, their values, strategy and the ability to translate and successful implementation of their strategy.

As a result Capita HR solutions were approached to support the creation of SCSP from three individual schools.

"This project has come about through a genuine desire to understand the customer's values and to successfully implement a core strategy."

Sharon Lilley -
School Service Manager

- All governors and senior managers involved were enthused and ambitious for the new organisation, but recognised a number of key challenges. The People challenges included:
- Creation of the new organisation whilst improving outcomes for the children
- Developing a common cohesive vision which would be understood by all
- Developing an organisational structure to underpin the vision and flexible enough to respond to an ever changing world
- Recruitment of 90% all the strategic leadership team across the three settings, this included principals, deputy principals and assistant principals
- Development of simplified, standardised systems and processes to bring about best value for money
- Creating a 'can do' culture recognising and acknowledging the context of each setting





Our Solution

When we were approached by SCSP to support and advise them during the transition, it quickly became clear that a critical success factor was the ability to draw upon our change management expertise our extensive HR knowledge, Customer Intelligence and a thorough understanding of the current and future changes within the external educational landscape.

The Capita team set out to:

Understanding the Why – co-creating a vision which would live for everyone in particular, governors; staff; community

- Outcomes – acting as a critical friend when co-creating the right structure to deliver improved outcomes for the children and their community
- Organisation – planning a co-ordinated approach to implementing the new structure/restructures
- Leadership - Recruitment of the right people, with the right skills, knowledge and attitude consistent with SCSP espoused values
- Employee engagement – ensuring all staff understood changing for success and their role within the changes
- Communication - ensuring all stakeholders understand both internal and external factors influencing the change, and what it means for the Trust
- Systems - Developing integrated working practices
- Continuous Improvement - robust analysis of plans
- Get to grips with the vision – what do the Trust want to achieve

How did we do it?

Once the decision was made to move to a Partnership Trust, the customers demonstrated a cocktail of enthusiasm, urgency, and passion for moving with pace, to bring about greater stability, in particular to 2 of the schools.

However rather than launching into a recruitment campaign, Capita were instrumental in influencing meaningful discussions and consultations between the Directors and the Executive Principal in:

- Gaining a common understanding of the impact of their vision across the different cultures
- Undertake research and benchmarking
- Critique organisational structure proposals and recommend alternative solutions
- Create job descriptions to meet the needs of the new organisation
- Identify the Key Competencies required by the organisation to enable effective assessment centres
- Continuous review after each key milestone particularly each recruitment phase
- Conflict management particularly when developing senior job descriptions
- Adopted a project management approach to delivery to enable us to support our customer in achieving success we were proactive in
- Attending Director's meetings to discuss proposal; seek approval for plans and timescales

■ On-going dialogue with all stakeholders, attending meetings, sharing of information, discussions and debating

■ Liaising with internal Capita stakeholders, Local Authority, ensuring all relevant parties were kept abreast of plans, inputs roles and responsibilities

■ Ensure Capita team back at the ranch were updated to enable them to be responsive to any customer ad hoc queries.

As a Learning Organisation Capita's thirst for continuous improvement dictated a post implementation review which was inclusive of the wider HR team

This included sharing of intelligence and lessons learnt. This allows the organisation to grow, as it strives to respond to customer demands by being flexible, adaptable and capable of responding to the continuing changing Educational agenda and being supplier of choice. Customers also receive a consistent seamless and forward thinking quality of service

Contact us:

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