

Training for Peak Performance

CASE STUDY -
NAPIER CITY COUNCIL

From civil defence, social housing and sewerage systems, to roading, rubbish and recreation centres, Napier City Council (Council) provides a wealth of essential services that keep their city running.

Tailor-made training for peak performance

With over 500 employees – and around 65,000 customers – putting Council policies and aspirations into action is no small undertaking. To ensure their teams are at peak performance, Council teamed up with learning and development specialists Aspire2 Business I Workplace Communication (Aspire2). And they couldn't be happier!

Last year Aspire2 Programme Managers worked closely with Council's management team, to identify key skill gaps within the organisation. This 'Training Needs Analysis' enabled Aspire2 to develop two unique programmes, that reduced the gap between the workplace skill demands and the skills of Council staff. One programme focused on customer excellence and the other on leadership capabilities, and both garnered powerful results.

Striving for customer excellence

Dealing with internal and external customers face to face, over the phone and via email, is a big part of the job for many Council employees - meeting customers' needs in a genuine and professional manner is paramount. To help staff deliver an excellent customer service experience, Aspire2 put together a 40-hour programme that would "impact positively on people's lives, by upskilling and empowering staff to use enhanced communication and work successfully together".

The programme content included - body language, barriers to communication, dealing with difficult behaviour and having courageous conversations. And the Council's four pillars of customer excellence provided the bedrock of the training programmes. The impact on the organisation was immediate.

"Learners have grown in confidence throughout the course. They have shared ideas and worked on using different strategies when faced with tricky customers or situations."

"Employees communicate more effectively and appropriately with their team and their customers."

"Employees understand the importance of clear

communication which will impact positively on the Council when combined with actively listening to their customers."

Building great leaders

Showing empathy, giving and receiving constructive feedback, and learning how to support others to achieve in their roles, are some of the many skills required to successfully navigate leading a team. Aspire2 helped Council course participants hone these capabilities, so they can support their teams to thrive and succeed. By understanding different communication styles, and learning how to deal with various personality types, staff have been able to enhance workplace relationships, boost staff morale, and ultimately create a more harmonious working environment.

"I am more aware of the difference in people's personality, learning styles and communication styles which helps me adapt my communication to suit the person."

"DOPE and the different leadership styles has taught me to maximise the strength of the different personalities and be more aware of the team environment and to work with these characteristics with a more open mind."

"After today I know I have the ability to speak confidently to my managers with facts to back up my ideas. If I know what I'm talking about it's actually quite easy."

"Active listening is something I have been working on when communicating with my colleagues. I think it has helped me to understand better what they are trying to communicate."

Time management

In a busy workplace like Council, time management is vital, no matter what role you are in. The Aspire2 training programme equipped learners with targeted time management strategies to improve their focus on KPI's, help them stay on task, and enable them to juggle the rigorous daily demands of Council life. By being able to prioritise and manage their time better, staff are enjoying less stress and better productivity.

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"As my workload changes daily, the pressures can increase. But now I cope very well and can prioritise workflow importance."

"I've started using Planner on Teams and it has majorly increased my ability to keep tasks on track."

The power of words

With many customer queries addressed via email, effective and professional writing skills are a must. Learners developed their report writing skills, boosted their email etiquette and learnt how to complete company documentation – including health and safety reports – with high levels of accuracy and detail. Since completing the programme, managers have noticed that staff are completing forms more frequently and communicating information via email more successfully. And not only that - they are also adopting more positive email tones, enhancing workplace relationships, and maintaining customer service excellence.

"I am thinking a little more about the tone and contents of my emails and reading over and formatting them better, so they are clearer for the reader."

"I'm getting much better responses from people now that I am being a bit nicer in my email communication."

Good for the business, good for the individual

A key reason to run a Workplace Communication programme is to make a long-term, sustainable difference to the business and the bottom line. But the impact of upskilling staff has an even bigger reach – its benefits extend beyond the workplace and out into the community. During the Aspire2 programmes each learner receives an ILP (Individual Learning Plan), created in collaboration with the Aspire2 team and designed to include not only business programme goals, but also individual goals. The skills that learners develop throughout the programme not only enhance their workplace performance but bring benefits to their homelife too.

"I am aware that everyone communicates differently, and messages need to be clear to achieve things. We are as much of a team at home as we are at work, and it is important to remember this."

"By improving my time management, I have a much better structured day, allowing me to spend more time with family."

Transformational results

The Aspire2 training programmes received rave reviews, both from the learners themselves and the Napier City Council's management team.

Not only did 100 percent of learners say they enjoyed the programme, but 100 percent of them also achieved their programme goals and gained skills that are now helping them every day in their roles.

Key business impacts for Napier City Council:

- ✓ Employees have improved engagement with their roles
- ✓ More effective communication with clients and co-workers
- ✓ Improved time management, reducing stress and increasing productivity
- ✓ Better team cohesion
- ✓ Increased confidence
- ✓ Growth of individuals and potential realised

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Workplace
Communication

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FREE* workplace training
Fully government funded by the Tertiary
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*learner eligibility criteria applies