

VINCI – RESPECT: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Action

VINCI wanted to implement Equality and Diversity training as part of their strategic approach to working with Crossrail. The following objectives were set for the 'RESPECT: Equality, Inclusion and Diversity in Action' programme:

- To provide a practical one day course for all managers, designed to raise awareness of the importance of their role in developing a positive culture of equality, inclusion and diversity.
- Providing managers with the awareness and skills to avoid discriminatory practices.
- Providing the key skills for managers to cascade this message to their teams and elsewhere in the organisation.
- Creating or utilising a DVD that shows a number of clips particularly relevant to some of the challenges that exist within the organisation (such as the impact of banter).
- Developing a Facilitator Guide to go with the DVD for managers to use as tools to cascade the messages and learning.
- To train managers in how to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) within the organisation, giving them the skills to lead a diversity culture and giving a bigger picture approach of their responsibilities as managers.

As indicated by the objectives, VINCI were interested in a two tier approach:

- A full day with a facilitator and an actor for managers to understand the key principles around creating a positive culture of inclusion and diversity with the afternoon focusing on the key skills and techniques for them to cascade this understanding to people in their teams or elsewhere in the organisation.
- The development of a bespoke Vinci Equality, Inclusion and Diversity DVD which managers learned how to use as the key tool to cascade learning after attending the above workshop.
- An additional half day for managers who required specific training in EqIA (Equality Impact Assessments) and/or would value achieving an accredited qualification as a result of this, giving them the skills to lead a diversity culture and giving a bigger picture approach of their responsibilities as managers.

Managers undertaking both the one day RESPECT training and the half day EqIA training also prepared and delivered an assessed presentation to achieve the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 4 Award in Managing Equality and Diversity in an Organisation.

The project started in August 2011 with agreement of scope, and is still running. 300 managers and staff have been through the Equality and Diversity training. The total value of the project was circa £90,000.

Subsequently to the management training, VINCI asked us to design and deliver follow-up sessions for frontline people (initially one day, then redesigned to become a half day), as one of the lessons learned was that managers didn't feel they had time to cascade their learning to their teams. We are still delivering these sessions which are currently being updated for further roll out and refresher training.

The competencies focused on are delegates' listening and communication skills, their ability to identify any individual or cultural issues impacting on an inclusive culture of respect, and their ability to respond in a way that has a positive outcome for all stakeholders.

We achieved the objectives through:

- A bespoke design, carefully aligned to VINCI's culture, values and language.
- A focus on engagement – of managers, their teams and senior leaders within VINCI.
- Key outcomes clearly identified and addressed.
- The use of actors in the frontline staff training made the programme real, immersive and stretching.
- ILM assignments for selected managers attending both the Equality and Diversity training and the EqIA training helped to embed the learning back at work and deliver business results.

As with every programme Keystone delivers, we wanted to ensure the training was aligned to the needs of VINCI, their stakeholders' expectations, their client Crossrail's expectations and to the needs of the delegates themselves. This means we took great care to fully understand VINCI's wider organisational initiatives, existing development programmes, competency frameworks, culture, values and language. We recognised that alignment and consistency were essential parts of ensuring the best fit and ongoing sustainability of the work. Keystone held an initial meeting with Jo Mercer, VINCI's Head of Organisational Development, and their HRBPs, to agree the objectives and scope of the programme. It was designed to meet the requirements of their key client Crossrail and so we ensured we referred to Crossrail's Equality and Diversity policy and Inclusion Policy during design. The approach was agreed prior to design work starting. The account manager and facilitator studied all relevant policies and processes that needed to be incorporated into the programme. Finally, the account manager and a colleague carried out a day of scoping with focus groups consisting of key business managers, some of the target delegate population and some of their direct reports in order to build up an accurate picture of their roles, challenges, culture and development needs relating to diversity..

The project and our approach has evolved following constant evaluation and feedback. For example, Keystone were asked to extend the scope of the project by delivering workshops to frontline employees for speed of roll out and also because our facilitators had the professional skills required to deal with some entrenched behaviours initially. This was aimed at supporting managers, rather than replacing their role in cascading a diversity approach, and they co-delivered with our facilitators where possible.

In terms of client relationship management, Angela Loggie, Keystone's Managing Director, acted as Strategic Account Manager and liaised with Jo Mercer to understand the objectives and scope of project. Esther Patrick, Keystone Learning and Development Consultant, acted as lead on design and operational account management, spending time with Jo Mercer and the HRBPs to fully understand the reality of the situations that were evident within the organisation around diversity and the challenges we would face in effectively dealing with beliefs, values and perceptions. Jo Raishbrook, Keystone Learning and Development Consultant and a specialist at designing drama-based learning, carried out shadowing with Esther Patrick and the delivery team, wrote all scripting and supported the facilitator and actor. Michelle Scaddan, Keystone's Learning Programmes Manager, handled all the administration, programme management, logistics and evaluation.

Keystone held constant review meetings with internal stakeholders, with the account manager having scheduled phone calls with the client after every intervention to review the resulting Client Evaluation Report and ensure the project was running as planned. Regular strategic reviews were scheduled at which the strategic and operational account managers met with VINCI to discuss project progress, any emerging themes or patterns and to discuss improvement opportunities/share best practice from Keystone's work with other organisations and sectors. A Communication Schedule was set up between the client, the internal Keystone team, the facilitator and actors at the start of the programme.

There were a number of ways in which Keystone demonstrated creativity and flexibility in working with the client.

- VINCI did not have the budget for a bespoke DVD and so we found a suitable generic alternative.
- It was difficult at times for VINCI to schedule in people for workshops and we moved many of them to be flexible.
- We were responsive to their needs, which often meant being in different ends of the country one day to the next, but we were able to do this due to the flexibility of our facilitators and actors.
- A collaborative approach which involved open and honest review and feedback. For example, there were some issues with a senior manager not demonstrating a positive approach to diversity and being quite obstructive. The account manager was able to raise this in an open and honest way with the client and it was dealt with sensitively and proactively.
- A discussion around why managers were not cascading the message after their initial one day of Diversity training and the need to give honest feedback to VINCI that one day is not enough to change behaviours and give them the skills and confidence to deal with what can be a challenging subject area as we are dealing with entrenched beliefs and values. This led to the agreement to use Keystone to roll out workshops to frontline staff with managers involved where possible.

Keystone and VINCI worked together to evaluate the project against Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. Evaluation forms were used to identify Level 1 'immediate reaction'. Delegate comments included:

- Very thought provoking – not what I expected at all (in a good way!).
- Course was interactive and informative, delivered very well, highlighted certain sensitive issues.
- Thought it was a very good course, didn't go through legislation – it made you think about equality and diversity.
- Very good, related to VINCI very well, giving examples relevant to construction, very interactive without making people feel uncomfortable.
- Course was informative with good interaction between trainer and attendees. Use of John [actor] to add realism was excellent, course would be beneficial to all management/technical/admin in all teams.
- I think all the team should do this course.

Line managers were encouraged to hold review and action planning conversations with their direct reports following their reports' attendance at training in order to assess Level 2 'learning'. Managers noticed a reduction in 'non inclusive' behaviour and a corresponding reduction in complaints from their reports (Level 3 'behavioural change'). Level 4 'business results' can be shown by VINCI's attainment, in July 2012, of Investors in Diversity status. The Investors in Diversity Award is given to organisations that take a structured and well-planned approach to equality and diversity, whilst understanding the different needs of stakeholders.

"Working with Keystone has been a breath of fresh air. We have seen an immediate impact on the behaviours of our people and subsequently improved performance across our business." – Jo Mercer, Head of L&D, VINCI

Major challenges included wanting to design the 'best learning solution' within the constraints of a specific budget that restricted us to having to use generic clips rather than bespoke Vinci DVD examples. We also had limited time frames – VINCI could only allow managers out for a day to understand RESPECT principles, how to identify and handle situations and also leading a positive culture and how to cascade. Lessons learned were that it would have been better if we had talked through with managers what was expected of them as a final design phase before accepting that one day was all that could be allowed. We believe with some facilitated discussion, they would have made themselves available for an additional day to practice the facilitator skills required to cascade the messages more effectively. Utilising the actor within this programme really worked well as the managers and frontline staff are a practical workforce who want to work through scenarios that happen or that they are challenged by in their working environment. The use of 'real play' allowed them to work through potential outcomes and how best to handle the situation and behaviour they have to manage.

The process and techniques used included an initial 'orientation' meeting, scoping with focus groups that consisted of a cross-section of managers, bespoke design, high impact, experiential delivery using drama-based learning and a DVD tool, two workshops available to meet each manager's development need exactly, mapping of the programme to an ILM qualification, leading to managers attending both workshops gaining the Level 4 Award in Managing Equality and Diversity in an Organisation, regular reviews with a view to continuous improvement, and a client-centred approach that put VINCI's needs and long-term success at the heart of everything we did.

Our monitoring of performance for facilitators and actor-facilitators was carried out using Level 1 of Kirkpatrick's 4 levels of evaluation by asking delegates to score their subject knowledge, communication skills etc.

Mid- and end-point review meetings plus regular telephone contact with the account manager ensured that we were continuously checking performance and VINCI's satisfaction with it, and would have been able to act quickly on any issues.