

CASE STUDY: SALFORD HEALTH MATTERS – THE CHAIR’S PERSPECTIVE

About Salford Health Matters

Salford Health Matters was set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) to deliver primary health care services to patients in the more deprived areas of Salford.

About the Challenge

Context

We began working with Potent 6 as the founder Directors set up the company and formed a Board. We wished to develop shared values and missions but recognized that there were tensions in the Board which needed to be articulated and resolved

Purpose of the work with Potent 6

- ✿ To facilitate the effective establishment and working of the Board of Directors

Desired Outcomes

- ✿ Clear understanding and agreement on role and functioning of the Board of Directors
- ✿ Development of Mission and purpose to form the basis of the initial Business plan
- ✿ Effective working relationships within the Board

What happened

What Potent 6 did

Potent 6 facilitated a series of residential and non-residential events to deliver a structured programme of development. This was supported by some facilitated Board meetings and individual coaching for some of the Directors.

How we responded

The Board developed the company mission and values but the tensions were not completely resolved. Some of the Directors found the exploration of their personal leadership styles and the impact that had on the Board and business difficult to work on and refused to engage meaningfully with the process. The majority of the Board found the process very helpful and learnt a great deal which was put to good effect as the business grew and developed.

What was it about the way Potent 6 worked with us, that helped make the difference?

The focus on inspirational leadership, personal responsibility and awareness was very appropriate to our situation. The quality of the facilitation was exceptionally helpful as was the supporting learning materials. The active presence of the facilitators in “real life “situations e.g. Board meetings was very powerful.

What was achieved

Immediate impact – outputs

- ✿ Development and agreement of the company vision, values and business priorities
- ✿ Robust processes to ensure the effectiveness of the Board meetings
- ✿ Increase in skills and confidence of Directors

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Outcomes

Anticipated

- ✿ Strengthening of Board purpose and focus
- ✿ Living the values
- ✿ Improved Board performance
- ✿ Improved company performance on contract delivery

Unanticipated

- ✿ Articulating the tensions between Directors leadership styles led to a recognition that the differences were irreconcilable and 2 Directors resigned

What did we learn

Salford Health Matters

- ✿ Importance of the Board’s leadership in contributing to the performance of the company
- ✿ The damage masking tensions can do
- ✿ An ability to articulate difference in a non-judgemental way and seeking ways to harness energy and passion into moving the company forward rather than “winning and losing” Board room battles.
- ✿ Confidence in the skills of the Board

What the people said

Potent 6 – Louie Gardiner’s perspective

“The absolute imperative for me as the facilitator was to hold on to the bigger purpose of the organisation - even when that meant asking the difficult questions, being a mirror to the ways in which individuals were behaving and inviting them to give constructive truthful feedback about their impact on each other, the organisation, their customers and ultimately their own reputations. My time with Salford Health Matters was a huge privilege and called on our individual and collective courage to ‘speak truth to power’ whatever our fear of imagined consequences. I did this as did the Board collective. Salford Health Matter’s performance in its first contract years is proof of how the greater good was served.”

The Chair’s last word

“It wasn’t ever an easy journey but the support of Potent 6 made a significant contribution to our understanding of how we could become the business we passionately wanted to be and our achievement of that level of performance.”

Helen McFarlane, former Chair of the Board, Salford Health Matters

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