

Commercial awareness in the public sector

Overview

As the public sector is increasingly opened up as a commercial market in which organisations compete against each other and the private sector for contracts, the need for key staff to have commercial skills is paramount. Many public sector organisations are also looking to generate additional income and being commercially aware is vital for this to be a success.

Learning objectives

This programme will help you:

- See commercial awareness as a different mind-set, not just another skill-set
- Use a variety of tried-and-tested commercial analytical and decision-making tools and techniques
- Define your commercial objectives
- Develop a strategic focus
- Start looking at service clients as market segments
- Analyse your service offering in a competitive context
- Plan a commercial strategy... prepare for its implementation... see it through to execution

Who should attend?

This is an ideal programme for all those whose role, and future career development, requires a greater degree of commercial awareness and understanding, including:

- Heads of service required to develop a commercial strategy
- Service managers and others required to implement a commercial strategy
- Anyone in a public (or third sector) service environment who is now required to think more commercially

Course format

An inter-active one-day workshop with a strong emphasis on real-life scenarios and the practical application in the public sector of the most popular, successful and academically rigorous tools and techniques used in the private sector.

Special features

For maximum benefit from the workshop, we recommend that the trainer be briefed on the organisational background in order to tailor the case studies and practical exercises.

The expert trainer

David is a former senior manager of a local authority and has been providing strategic consultancy advice to the public sector for the last ten years.

Whilst a business manager for a traded service of Norfolk County Council he undertook one of the first academic studies looking into the factors that determine the commercial effectiveness of local authority traded services whilst studying for his MSc in Marketing. Since that time he has worked extensively across the public, third and private sectors, developing the commercial performance of business units, improving commercial capability and identifying how corporate bodies can maximise the benefits of their traded services.

David has provided these services for many NHS Trusts, a variety of local authorities and the Science and Technology Facilities Council in the public sector. His public sector clients include Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, South Norfolk Council, East Cambridgeshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation NHS Trust, NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, DCLG, and the Science and Technology Facilities Council. He has also worked across the East of England to improve the competitiveness of social businesses and as a consultant for central government on the provision of services to local authorities through IDeA and Talent Bank.

In the private sector, David has delivered commercial awareness services for SAB Miller and Saga.

Course outline

1 What is commercial thinking?

- Understand what it means to be a commercial thinker
- Looking at the services that you provide, to identify commercial opportunities often involves not only a different skill set but also a different mindset

2 Defining strategic commercial objectives

- How to define your key commercial objectives
- How to prioritise your strategic objectives
- Two key strategic planning tools:
 - PESTLE
 - Resource and Competency Matrix
 - How to apply these tools to your particular situation

3 Developing a strategic focus

- Decision-making on how to compete in the markets identified by your strategic objectives requires a strategic focus
- Developing strategic focus
- Using the Ansoff Matrix as a tool for helping you to make those decisions

4 Defining customer targets

- How to think more commercially by understanding who all your customers are and how they differ from each other
- Customer segmentation – how to apply the principles to your areas to identify the type of customers you have and their key characteristics
- Scenarios – who are your customers? How do their needs vary?

5 The competitive market place

- Understanding the competitive forces at play
- Different types of competition
- Using Porter's 5 Forces model to analyse your competitive environment

6 Meeting stakeholder expectations

- Two simple models to help you identify the key stakeholders who could influence your commercial environment
- How to use your stakeholders to help you achieve your commercial objectives

7 Implementation – systems, structures and processes

- Effective commercial activity involves working with others to implement ideas and strategies
- What do you need to have in place before you implement your commercial strategy?
- How to use the McKinsey 7S framework to health-check your organisation prior to implementation

8 Implementation – people and culture

- A good commercial strategy only works if the culture of the organisation is conducive to the effective implementation and if the people involved buy in to the ideas
- How the latest thinking in behavioural economics can help you develop your culture and people to work commercially

9 Tools and checklists

- A commercial checklist to help you be more commercial within your sphere of influence
- Using the checklist as a benchmark against the most commercially aware organisations
- Using the checklist as a health check – both corporately and individually