Consulting with internal clients

One or Two Full Days

This is a higher level program that encourages participants to review the way they work and develop new techniques, such as negotiation skills.

This outline is for a two day program. However you may want to select key modules and conduct it over one day.

What is consulting?

- What does ‘consulting’ mean in your area?
- What turns an OK level of customer service into high quality consulting?
- The crucial difference between meeting a client’s wants and their real needs
- How to increase your credibility with clients by providing expert advice

Setting and exceeding client expectations

- How are your clients’ expectations set i.e. do they know how long things take?
- Real life examples demonstrate how setting the customer's expectations at the right level can significantly improve their level of satisfaction
- How to ensure you under-promise and over-deliver

Identifying client needs

Asking the right questions at the start of a meeting or phone is provides background information that allows you to tailor your solution.

- The best questions to start a discussion, without sounding like an interrogator
- How to ask questions that will help you guide the discussion
- How to explore underlying issues and attitudes e.g. How do you feel about the changes? How do these policies affect your current work? Who uses the system?

Advanced communication skills

- How to explain policies or procedures from the client’s perspective, not yours
- The most common words and phrases that undermine people's confidence in you
- The "power" words that always make you sound confident
- How to use your eye contact and body language to look confident when you feel unsure
- Learn how to buy time under pressure and ‘think on your feet’

The gentle art of persuasion

- How to convert features or policies into benefits
- Simple tips for persuading people
- How to gain commitment, not just acceptance, of your solution

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Managing change

Understanding the 4 phases that people go through when faced with change can greatly improve a consultant's ability to help clients accept new ideas or policies.

- The four phases of change: denial, resistance, exploration, commitment
- Practical steps to help people move through the stages and accept innovations

Negotiating with clients

Staff conduct mini-negotiations with bosses, colleagues and clients every day. This practical session teaches the skills for resolving these issues skilfully.

<u>Preparing</u>	What are you trying to achieve from the meeting?
	What is the client trying to achieve?
	What's your fallback position if you can't agree?
	How to prepare contingency plans for likely problems or objections
	The pros and cons of face to face, phone and email 'negotiations'
<u>Negotiating</u>	How to clarify the agenda - asking the right questions to uncover needs
	What are the issues? (time, cost, expertise, support, information etc.)
	How to 'trade' the right issues at the right time
	How to use questions to counter unreasonable requests
	Staying focused on the problem – not the personalities
	Getting it in writing e.g. sending a brief summary by email

Team negotiation case study

The group is broken into small teams. Each team is briefed for an enjoyable negotiation with another team. Participants conduct the negotiation using the skills from the previous sessions. This session enables participants to put the theory into practice.

Giving "bad news" with empathy and respect

Sometimes it is not possible to satisfy clients because of regulations or limited resources. However it *is* possible to give bad news in a positive way.

- When do you find it difficult to express yourself confidently e.g. senior managers?
- How to acknowledge other people's opinions without patronising them
- How to control your frustration when people won't listen
- How to respond calmly to personal criticism of you or your team
- The proven 3 step technique for explaining your position calmly and logically

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