The Health Professions Council

An organisational "health check"

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Some previous clients:

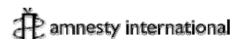
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The health check methodology – key aspects

Burke-Litwin model

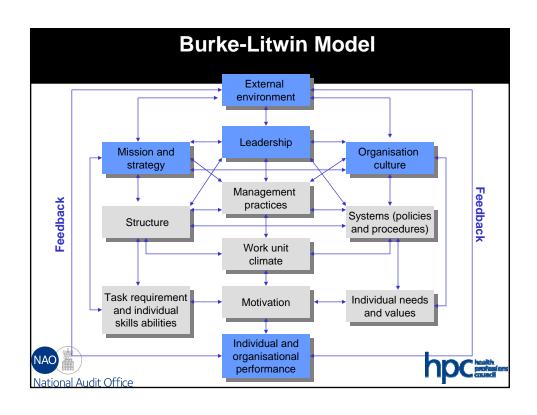
- Useful diagnostic tool
- Helps to look at the whole system (not just functions or funding streams)
- Tried and tested model for assessing organisational health
- Particularly useful in looking at capacity for change (blue boxes)

Appreciative inquiry

- Focus on negative emotions/problems leads to a narrowing of thinking (danger with traditional audit approach)
- Focus on positive emotions leads to a broadening and deepening of thinking, which can lead to solutions
- But note the technique will clearly identify the problems too, though indirectly!







HPC: strong current performance and future challenges

- · Low registration fees for the field
- Improving feedback from stakeholders in education and professional bodies
- Very positive feedback from Council members on organisation, employees and support provided
- Efforts being made to raise public profile
- Growth in staff: 25 to 111 in six years
- Growth in registrants 4.5% per year, with new professions coming on board





Introduction – History...

The overall question set for us by HPC

"How can the HPC retain the positive cultural aspects of being a small organisation, whilst managing a rapid and significant growth over the next few years?"





Introduction... Independent...

What we did

- Interviews with 35 employees and 6 Council members
- Selection of sample by NAO, partially random, partially targeted, to provide coverage of teams and grades
- Analysis using the Burke-Litwin model and Edward de Bono's "Six thinking hats"
- Presentations to EMT and all staff meeting; draft written report
- A representative picture? Your opportunity to comment





Unpicking the question

- What positive cultural aspects does HPC currently have?
- What cultural positives have already been lost or deteriorated through growth and change?
- What cultural positives have been created by growth to date?





What positive cultural aspects does HPC currently have?

- Highly motivated employees
- A friendly and relaxed environment
- Non-hierarchical structure and attitude
- Positive feedback and honesty
- Buy-in to organisational values and mission
- Employees embrace change
- Energy and loyalty from employees
- Confidence in the leadership of the organisation





What cultural positives have been lost or deteriorated already?

- People no longer 'know everyone'
- Inter-departmental interaction less easy, so it happens less
- More difficult to find appropriate contacts (potentially affecting efficiency and customer service)
- Employees have less individual exposure to senior management
- Less out-of-hours socialising





What cultural positives have been brought about by growth to date?

- More formal internal policies and standards
- More efficient task management e.g. processing registrations,
- Better working structure within departments
- Strong project work
- Recruitment of external expertise
- Initially, opportunities for career development





The challenge

- · What can be kept?
- What cannot be kept and how can it be replaced?
- What should not be kept?

'The friendly family feeling won't be lost if properly managed. We need to maintain an organisation that has a vision that people feel a part of. If you look at any successful organisation they've got that employee support.'





We recommend, to consolidate and build on a healthy culture, HPC focus on:

- Leaders taking the employees along with them on strategy
- Clearly supporting and valuing all staff
- Building middle management capacity
- Increasing inter-departmental interaction and understanding, for clear business reasons
- Understanding and addressing motivational factors in the changing organisation
- Continuing to aim for excellence, "to be the best"





External Environment

"Macro"

- Regulatory backdrop e.g. "reducing the burden"
- · Increased public interest in risks in healthcare
- Customer service expectations in the era of internet banking etc
- Changes in higher education sector; volume of students and places

"Micro"

- Lack of direct control over future workload and possible legislation
- Benchmarking/competition with other regulators; oversight by CHRE
- Little public knowledge of HPC how important?
- Gaps in (new) registrants' understanding of what HPC does or why they pay fees





Leadership

- Role and personality of Chief Executive is key to setting the tone
- Strong leadership by the President has made major difference to Council as a body and its relations with employees
- The Council and EMT have matured and are now highly effective
- EMT sometimes lack visibility
- Not always clear that leaders are aware of pressure points

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Mission and Strategy

- Council and employees at all levels share an understanding of mission and values
- All are excited about taking on new work
- But much less shared understanding of the strategy and some anxiety about this
- A need to communicate more about not just what you are going to do, but how you are going to do it.





Organisational culture

- Still relatively non-hierarchical
- 'Can-do' attitude and sharing of challenges
- Devolved authority; shared responsibility most employees feel trusted
- Lots of communication though not always the right information
- Sense of unity/family, though this is under threat





Management Practices

- Managers encourage employees to be innovative But...
- Middle managers lack experience and confidence
- Lack of clarity and consistency in their roles and responsibilities
- Perception of inconsistency or possible unfairness in management practices, policy application
- Emerging contrasts between Registrations and the rest



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Work unit climate

Feelings about working here include:

- "Positive, friendly, relaxed, ambitious and hard working"
- Like the location, new building and environment
- Social aspects are important
- Want more inter-departmental interaction
- Some lack of confidence in service from other departments





Motivation

Five factors have helped build goodwill, energy and commitment:

- 1. 'Amazing' benefits
- 2. Friendly work climate with positive personal interactions
- 3. Opportunities to progress
- 4. Affection for HPC and commitment to the shared purpose
- 5. Sense of improving performance and good feedback from stakeholders, plus an exciting future

However...

- Erosion of no. 3; and increased pressure on nos. 4 and 5 caused by workload, anxiety about future, separation of teams and less social interaction. Especially for Registrations team.
- Nos 1 and 2 are not enough on their own.
- Need to be clear about motivators and consider how to replace what is lost

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