



Project reflections- September 2015

Interconnect

Reflections of a year gone by.....

We are now on the home stretch in terms of our Civil Service Academy project and it is time to look back and reflect on the past 11 months. There have been good days and bad days but the journey and experience has been invaluable.

Learning...

I have really developed my organisational skills from being the Communications Manager for the Interconnect team. I feel I have kept the team on track in terms of agenda setting, drafting of minutes and devising a meeting schedule in line with our project milestones.

I have also developed my event management skills in terms of running and preparing for an event, this is an area I have not been involved with before.

This has really enhanced my performance within my daily role in regards to the support I can give my Resident Judge and the part I can play in bigger departmental events and initiatives.

The experience gained by being part of this project has given me the confidence to take things forward and challenge others, including Senior Management, when things do not seem in line with the vision of the Civil Service being one department with one goal.

As a result of this new found confidence, I feel more empowered and able to speak up and lead from the front in terms of change and reform within my own department and the wider Civil Service.

The Interconnect event also developed staff from other departments in terms of them running stalls and giving presentations. This focussed their minds on the vision of their department and how they fit into the wider Civil Service.

If I was to do anything differently, I would have spoken up and put myself forward for a chance to be the Project Manager of Interconnect. I feel I missed an opportunity to manage the team as a whole and lead us to success. I think I may have taken a step back from the more powerful personalities within the team and allowed others to take the lead.

However, on positive note, the overall experience of this project has given me the confidence in my own abilities to volunteer for such a role in the future.

Challenging...

The main challenge faced was that of time and being able to assign enough time for project work. Each project team member is from a different department and in the case of two members of the original team, a different area of the country. The logistical challenges in addition to our busy day jobs sometimes meant things

became quite pressured. It was essential that we kept in touch and had meaningful team meetings when we could get together.

Sometimes management within our own departments were not as supportive and accommodating as we would have hoped. This was disappointing and a little demoralising as some managers did not appear to be engaged with the Civil Service Local ethos and the development prospects that the Academy could offer.

We lost a team member early on in the project and then a further member between the pilot and main events. We were also missing a team member at the time of the main event due to illness.

But we were not deterred by the depletion of the project team and powered on to deliver our event on time.

Achieving and succeeding....

As a team, our greatest achievement has been delivering what we set out to do in our original scoping document. We kept to milestones and managed the project to a high and professional standard. Alongside our day jobs and other commitments, this is a huge success.

We received excellent feedback from the delegates that attended both of our events and those involved with the Civil Service Academy.

Our Sponsor, Malcolm Boswell, attended the mid year review and both of our Interconnect events, he has been very supportive and believed in our project every step of the way. He has been positive in terms of feedback in relation to the organisation and professional flair of our events which is rewarding both as a project team and individually.

We have also succeeded in developing and producing 'How to Interconnect', a guide to delivering your own networking event. It is hoped this guide can be used to support other Civil Servants in holding their own Interconnect networking event and continue with the vision in promoting 'One Civil Service', by providing a gateway for networking for staff between departments in what is becoming a smaller and more efficient Civil Service.

On a personal note, I have written a review of our Interconnect event that was held in July 2015 and this has been well received by both our project sponsor and the Learning and Development, Capability Partner for Midlands and National Business Centres (HMCTS). It has also been used as the basis for an article on the Operational Delivery website at the request of Fiona Jones (Head of the Operational Delivery Profession Unit, Civil Service Learning).

It is personally satisfying that I am able to share our project and success with others across the Civil Service and my review is a catalyst for inspiration. I am proud of what the Interconnect project has achieved and the long lasting bond we have formed as a project team.

Claire Tomlinson

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