

How do you get 25 people to agree to a common goal?

A Guest Article by Rosanna Henderson
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A challenging day

Picture the scene: 25 people in a room, all working for one organisation but from locations scattered all over the country. All striving to achieve a worthy objective but split into several groups according to their day-to-day responsibilities and needs.

The perspective of each group needs to be heard by other groups, but equally each person needs to feel they have been heard and their views taken on board. All this is to be accomplished in one day. Steep challenge, huh?

The goal: a three-year business plan

This was the position a charity, Sick Children's Trust, found itself in when it wanted to create the basis for its three-year business plan. Sick Children's Trust aims to provide high quality "Home from Home" accommodation for families whose children are receiving hospital treatment for serious illnesses.

The Trust exists to support and promote the child's recovery and to support the fabric and wellbeing of the family as a whole when under the extreme stress of such an experience. The highest standards of care are to be applied in all aspects of the charity's work.

Distinct groups

The charity organised a Strategic Away Day, with all of the charity's staff divided into distinct groups. There were care home managers, finance department personnel, administrators, office-based staff and the charity's trustees.

Each group had a very distinct set of requirements regarding the business plan; each group had a different perception of how the charity's work should develop. It was obvious that someone was needed to direct the day and help each person and group to be heard and to hear the others.

A chance to contribute

I took on the challenge of facilitating the charity's Strategic Away Day. My task was to ensure the objectives of the day were reached, while giving everyone a chance to contribute and make their concerns and issues heard, all the while keeping a keen eye on the clock. Quite a balancing act!

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Four key areas tackled

Some innovative and fun ice-breakers allowed the group to get to know each other in a relaxed way. The day was broken down into four modules and, using different techniques, tackled the following key areas:

- Three-year vision
- Risk assessment
- Pulling the plan together
- Action plan.

There was plenty of time for Q&A sessions and each group had the opportunity to present in a variety of ways, thus enhancing their communication and presentation skills.

Goals achieved

The day was a great success and it was agreed that a great amount of team building had been achieved. All participants were able to contribute to the business plan framework. Each group had a better understanding of the concerns and needs of the others.

Most of all, everyone's enthusiasm for the Charity's work was reconfirmed and their commitment to the plan is stronger than ever.

The team completed their day by having a well-earned drink.

Rosanna Henderson

A TCii Associate who focuses on HR issues and facilitation

If you would like more information on any of the points covered in this Guest Article, please contact **TCii** on **020 7099 2621**.