



Achieve Breakthrough

Case Study

Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust

The Trust was experiencing several forces for change some common to many hospitals, others specific to The Trust.

These included:

- Pressures from The Trust's purchasers for 'more for less'
- Value differences as business issues clouded with medical issues
- A requirement for both quality and efficiency
- A need to shift the organisation from one centred around profession and hierarchies, to one focussed on the patient and the care process
- A desire to develop a strategy to take The Trust into the 21st Century

The Challenge

These forces demanded continuing and radical change, which would affect all staff. Historically, there would have been a number of people in The Trust, mostly managers leading and managing the changes. The other 3,500 staff would have been, to varying degrees, recipients of the changes, resulting in grudging compliance or resistance. Driving change through regardless of staff was not an option for the Trust, which had recognised that to achieve its desired future it would need to transform its culture, create a new openness and demonstrate its ability to work together across departments and different functions.

The Solution

Breakthrough began working with The Trust as an external change agent to help the organisation explore what was needed to create the necessary cultural shift. The intention of the relationship was to create an environment where the power of staff was harnessed and the whole organisation was involved in creating its future.

There were two key ingredients if the transformation of the organisation was to be a success. Firstly, the instinctive leadership of a CEO who speaks, and more critically, acts in a way that is aligned to the values and vision of The Trust. Secondly, a number of champions for culture change, in different disciplines and different levels within The Trust.

The Results

Breakthrough worked as integral members of The Trust for two years. Seminars with more than 800 staff; practical, multi-disciplinary, non-hierarchical project groups; and personal coaching with champions of the culture change all worked in taking people to a new space where they could think about things differently and so act differently.

As a result:

- Relationships across functions and levels of The Trust emerged based on equality, commitment, supportiveness and openness.
- People's thinking shifted from past negative experiences of change and personal concerns to the future and possibility for creating new openings for action together
- The Trust met its budgets in the face of a previously predicted £7 million financial overspend
- In a period of one year, cross-functional project groups brought down patient waiting time from 16 to 2 weeks

- In response to new government league tables, the cross-functional teams were able to work together to re-design processes around the patient to produce cost and time savings

“Our culture was constrained and rule-bound. We were looking to become freer with a more 'can do' attitude. Breakthrough Technologies supported us in harnessing the power of all staff to tackle the challenges of shifting our organisation.”

“A culture centred around professions and hierarchies was transformed to one focused on the patient and the patient care process.”

Ron Cooper, Ex-CEO, Royal Berkshire Hospital