



Third sector collaboration

Lloyds Banking Group

Katharine Sargent, head of Talent and Development, has seen how bringing together teams from the corporate world and from the charitable organisation, The Comedy School, has reaped high performance benefits for both sides

Key learning points

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| 1. Make sure both teams have clear aims | 3. Adopt new ways of working for mutual benefit |
| 2. Mix disciplines and experience for maximum outcome | 4. Challenge accepted values and formats |

In Lloyds Banking Group we are committed to building a high performance culture with a distinct leadership identity where leaders display high commitment.

We want to rebuild trust and pride in our organisation and part of the way we can do this is through commitment

to serving our customers and the communities we work in. We are the biggest corporate investor in UK communities, having invested £76m last year in grassroots charities, financial inclusion and capability, and sports for young people but we go further than just donating money.

The Emerging Executives Enterprise

Partnership programme, created and facilitated by Tinder-Box, a strategic coaching and leadership development consultancy, offered us the opportunity to invigorate our future leaders. We want to challenge our talent to learn and develop skills that will drive our business forward in an innovative and truly engaging way. The programme

offered this in a way that would hook into our colleagues' emotional energy for a truly memorable learning experience. What better way than by placing the team in a completely new environment, working with people who have focus, passion and commitment, and asking them to unlock a real commercial challenge which successfully realised could have positive long-lasting implications.

Following a rigorous planning phase, we teamed with The Comedy School, a social enterprise which runs drama and comedy courses in many different settings, from schools to prisons and gangs, designed to help analyse issues around peer pressure, cultural contexts, social behaviour and personal experiences. As an organisation, The Comedy School team faces very different daily challenges and decisions to those of Lloyds Banking Group.

Both organisations had clear aims going into the programme. For The Comedy School, successful fundraising is vital, so working closely with us gave them access to real insights into how to unlock the potential revenue stream from approaching corporate organisations.

This was very much a learning experience for members of our team, who were purposefully selected to mix disciplines and experience. Leadership behaviours were aligned to our strategy, personal strengths and development areas, including the ability to perform at pace were all monitored and analysed, ensuring the positive behaviours we learned would be translated back to the workplace.

Methodology

A structured and efficient approach ensured a constructive experience and measurable return. With that in mind we:

Stage 1: established the leadership capability to be strengthened;

Stage 2: identified the skills we had to offer the chosen social enterprise;

Stage 3: were matched with The Comedy School from a shortlist of potential partners;

Stage 4: following a chemistry meeting between a select number from each team the programme content, length and format was tailored around our desired outcomes;

Stage 5: pre-event ensured each team member involved were clear on their own objectives by using individual and confidential coaching sessions;

Stage 6: embarked on a two-day programme;

Stage 7: engaged in post-programme individual coaching to consolidate learning.

Day One

- *Briefing:* The Comedy School briefed Lloyds on the organisation, its aims, activities and the difference it makes to the communities it works with.

- *Workshop:* Fast, furious and focused, this fact-finding workshop enabled both teams to discuss the priorities for The Comedy School and how this working partnership could add most value in the available timeframe. It was agreed the greatest need was to develop the proposition to access funds from

the corporate world that would create a sustainable revenue stream for the charitable work. Two strategies were developed around corporate sponsorship and providing unique soft-skills training to businesses. The output from these two days would not only be the marketing materials which would sell The Comedy School more effectively to organisations, but would also help in making introductions in the corporate world.

Day Two

- *Pitch preparation and delivery:* A 'real life' pitch to the managing director of a leading broadcast organisation for funds to run The Comedy School programme in 200 schools across the UK with the ultimate aim of saving lives. The team worked together to prepare the content and materials and then deliver the pitch itself.

- *Meeting agreed:* With a leading training vendor to pitch the new offering using a detailed achievable implementation plan for the new strategy for sustainable funding showing tangible benefits

The two-day programme proved challenging, productive and inspiring in a number of ways. With such limited resources, the Comedy School could not afford to waste either time or money. Time spent on this programme was at the expense of time spent elsewhere in the community so we had to make it count and deliver a tangible return. Each team came from a very different working environment so we

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had to work together without the comfort of an established structure or format. The Comedy School has very clear values which we needed to assimilate and understand very quickly; every idea and piece of work was critiqued and assessed from the outset against this set of values. It was essential to build trust with The Comedy School very quickly in order to work productively towards their goal.

Everyone involved was taken out of their comfort zone. We were challenging accepted values and formats, and this pushed us to adopt new ways of working for our mutual benefit. Working with a different business operation widened our outlook and energised our thinking. In working with The Comedy School, we knew we were making an important social contribution was extremely motivational.

Sustainable results

This innovative approach meant that every member of the team was under pressure to perform and deliver results taking into consideration factors from both teams — a fantastic way to embed learning in a practical environment.

By placing a group of Lloyds Banking Group department heads with professionals from a social enterprise, a meaningful way to identify and develop

positive leadership styles and behaviours was found. Faced with an objective which would have real — potentially life-changing — benefits to the social enterprise in question, the experience took on a completely new relevance, urgency and value for all those involved. For us, we identified some key behavioural learning that not only helped those involved understand themselves better as a leader but us as an organisation.

For The Comedy School, the benefits of the course were more diverse. Gaining expert advice on how best to work with corporate organisations, plus securing and growing contacts, will all have a direct benefit to the charity’s profile and funding. Equally important was the confidence the team members gained not only personally but also in the valuable work they carry out on a day-to-day basis. By working with us, The Comedy School:

- gained a greater understanding of how the organisation might get corporate sponsorship;
- learned how to open doors to new contacts and potential partners;
- discovered how to differentiate the organisation from the many other training providers;
- made new friends and supporters;
- continues to benefit from Lloyds specialists to follow through on the

action plans as the organisation is small with limited time and resources.

A spokesperson for The Comedy School summed up the positive outcome: “Our experience with Lloyds Banking Group was very positive, constructive and has given The Comedy School an injection of hope. The Comedy School is moving forward with new strategies that will enable us to have a sustainable future. Over the two days, we built up a relationship with the group and feel that not only have we made 10 new advocates for the Comedy School, but 10 new friends.”■

