

CASE STUDY 5: GOVERNMENT AGENCY

BACKGROUND + CONTEXT

A large government agency learned from workplace surveys that it wasn't performing well on overall employee satisfaction. Specifically, there were incidents at all levels of the organization where interpersonal conduct among staff was perceived to be problematic and this was identified as a key area for improvement. More importantly, there were concerns over how such incidents were dealt with.

Determined to maintain and improve its reputation as an exemplary employer, the agency decided to establish a corporate wellness program. Among other things, the wellness program was structured to incorporate appropriate training on workplace conduct issues as a supplement to existing harassment training.

THE PROACTIVE RESPONSE

ProActive was invited to deliver their **Respectful Workplace Fundamentals™** (RWP) as a component of the organization's employee training program, and worked with the agency for a two year period.

RWP 1 is largely informational in nature and focus is given to an awareness of the issues, while RWP 2 provides hard-skills training in the use of ProActive's "Straight Talk" model of communication. As an extension of the first two modules, RWP 3 is a hands on session that provides an opportunity for participants to really practice and hone the skills they learned in the preceding modules.

In this particular case, training was rolled out in various stages to over 3000 employees in multiple locations.

The first stage was a presentation of the first two modules to managers in order to prep them for sessions with each of their individual groups.

The second stage involved managers participating in sessions with their individual workgroups, which allowed them to hear feedback and actively engage their employees regarding issues and concerns pertaining specifically to their group.

Stage three involved enhanced manager training. With a solid knowledge of the challenges facing their workgroups, managers were provided with more intensive training in the form of RWP 3. This provided an opportunity to practice what they learned in relevant role playing activities and focused on developing consistency in managers' approach to these situations.



In response to issues identified by ProActive in their reports following the RWP sessions, a **Facilitated Dialogue for Solutions** (FDfS) session, and a number of **TJA Conferences** (TJAC) were held. An FDfS session is a structured decision making process utilizing a ProActive Facilitator. A TJAC is used in situations where conflict is rooted within complex relationships and more deep seeded issues.

THE RESULT

One participant noted that the training:

"Opened up the lines of ... communication of topics often not discussed."

When asked if participants would recommend the session to others, over 85% of the time participants responded yes.

Since the program's inception, the agency has been publicly recognized as a "Top 40" employer and subsequent employee surveys have indicated an increase in overall satisfaction. Managers feel they have the improved ability to recognize and respond to issues and have also reported positive and long lasting changes in workplace behaviour.

PROACTIVE PRODUCTS USED IN THIS CASE

Respectful Workplace Fundamentals™ is a comprehensive training program comprised of three modules:

Module 1 is designed to facilitate the creation and maintenance of safe, healthy and productive workplaces.

Module 2 is a skills-based session designed to facilitate the development of robust, respectful and professional dialogue in the workplace through the use of the Straight Talk conversational framework. This framework helps us engage with peers during potentially difficult conversations, in a respectful, professional manner.

Module 3 is an activity based session designed to allow participants to build on skills obtained from Modules 1 and 2 by practicing the StraightTalk model through role play.

Dialogue For Solutions (facilitated session) helps groups share information and arrive at decisions effectively. The ProActive facilitator involves all group members and ensures all contributions are heard. The process is particularly useful for complex or divisive issues. The discussion is clearly focused around gaining members' commitment to create and execute a clearly defined action plan.

TJA Conferencing is a robust group process used to address workplace conflict and allows affected individuals to confront their difficulties and develop a plan to overcome them. TJA Conferencing is not mediation, it is a structured three-stage process designed to turn conflict into cooperation.

