



WALES & WEST UTILITIES: EMBEDDING BEHAVIOURS THROUGH NEUROSCIENCE

THE DESTINATION:

Wales & West Utilities' belief is that HOW people behave in the workplace is as important as WHAT they deliver. Behaviours not only drive standards, they also play a fundamental role in how the organisation wants to be perceived; what they want to be known for, both internally and externally.

With this in mind, a behavioural framework was created – following significant staff consultation - to underpin their organisational Ambition, Priorities and Values. The framework translates their Ambition, Priorities and Values into everyday activities. Sticky Change was then approached to design and deliver a programme aimed at ensuring that their management population fully engaged with the new behaviours. A programme was designed that equipped their managers with the skills to promote and embed the behavioural framework, and ultimately, to have the confidence to give their people both appreciative and developmental feedback dependent on HOW they behaved, not just WHAT they delivered.

AS A RESULT OF THE PROGRAMME, PARTICIPANTS NOW:

1. Understand the relevant structures and mechanisms of a person's brain when encouraging behavioural change and high performance
2. Understand what goes on in the brain when a person is trying to change habits and behaviours
3. Understand what needs to be done to minimise the likelihood of a defensive or aggressive response, and know what to do if this does happen
4. Understand the function and importance of the brain's neurochemistry, particularly how to stimulate the production of beneficial neurochemicals and diminish the power the disempowering neurochemicals
5. Are able to recognise when someone's brain isn't performing at its best and what to do about it
6. Understand how create the environment in which people are more able to accept feedback and change their behaviours
7. Understand how to have constructive and developmental conversations about behaviours

BUSINESS BENEFITS

This programme is still ongoing, with a second phase due later this year, but the expected business benefits are as follows:

- The programme is aligning the organisation's Ambition and Priorities with the 'how' of their Values and emphasise to all the importance of the manner of delivery not just the end results of delivery.



- It is improving managers' and their teams' performance and thereby, driving improved business delivery.
- It is building and strengthening relationships both internally and externally.
- It is supporting and informing performance discussion/reviews between members of staff and their managers, resulting in more committed individuals who are clear about where they add value to the business.
- It aids in the organisational self-reflection on how individuals and team behaviours may affect the overall business performance both positively or, indeed, negatively.
- Finally, but crucially, people at WWU pride themselves on never knowingly walking past an unsafe act - this programme has given everyone permission to 'never knowingly walk past poor behaviours'.

THE INTERVENTION

Sticky Change designed and delivered a 1 day workshop for all 90+ managers that focuses on the practical appliance of neuroscience in a managerial context as the primary content. We chose neuroscience as the means of educating people to both change their own habits and those of others as it speaks to everyone's performance, regardless of individual personality.

Given the high proportion of engineers in the management population, the focus on neuroscience was very impactful: they fully engaged with it, as the content was seen to be scientifically proven and factual.

An initial roll out was undertaken to include all managers, from the Executive Team members to the Front Line Manager level. At least 1 workshop is now held on an annual basis for all newly appointed managers.

The 2nd follow up module is now being designed.

THE FORMAT

- The training workshop is delivered by 2 Sticky Change trainers with support from an Executive Director or Senior Leader.
- The workshop is aligned to the participants' work context and reality. While neuroscience theory and models are introduced as appropriate, the emphasis is on how participants will use these skills and knowledge in their everyday working life.
- The participants attend in mixed cross functional groups of between 16 – 30 and work in sub groups to discuss real behavioural changes they want to encourage back in the work place.
- It is a highly interactive day. It encourages the exploration of skills and knowledge while allowing for meaningful discussions around the theory and practice that is introduced to participants.



THE SO WHAT FACTORS

Participants on the course described it as outlined below:



Their knowledge and skills, as rated before and after the course, saw increases from anywhere from 30% to 95%.

On a scale of 1 – 6, the trainers were rated consistently at 6 (excellent) for their approachability, knowledge, communication skills and energy and enthusiasm.

When asked about the likelihood of them taking action from the day, 41% said they would **very definitely** do things differently and rest of the participants said they **definitely** do things differently.

Feedback from participants on the programme:

A very exciting, stimulating and knowledgeable course

Interesting and very useful course, delivered in an engaging way

I really enjoyed this course. It challenged the way I currently interact with my colleagues

Superb facilitators

Typical comments from the participants, on their actions arising from the programme:

- I will have more behavioural discussions with my staff. Discussions which are much more challenging ...
- I will treat people with more empathy and understand their needs
- I will praise more
- I will listen more; to fully allow people to finish and understand them more; not to fly off the handle.

According to participants, the subsequent impact of the training has been:

- “Rather than hearing people talk about a person’s behaviour, instead you often hear them ask questions like ‘I wonder what’s going on for that person?’ This demonstrates a desire to get to the root cause rather than deal with the symptoms alone.”
- “Having coached a couple of people through some of the neuroscience modules and in particular the amygdala hijack bit, I’ve been amazed at the way the “penny drops”. Each person has understood the theory almost immediately and it has given them great confidence in understanding how they approach future relationships, situations or experiences.”



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- “My behaviour has changed in a positive way as I am more aware of the journey that individuals might go through when experiencing any kind of change in the work place. I have realised that some of my colleagues need more time than others to reach the same goal as they all deal with situations differently.”
 - “I have changed how I interact with my team, depending on the person and the style that I have learnt that they respond to the best. All this knowledge about my colleagues has only been possible after I realised how important a good rapport with my staff is. Following the Behavioural Competency Training I realised that it is key to engage on a much higher level with my staff in order to build a genuine rapport. This has built my relationships and I see a much better return on work output, with energy and pride as the level of trust that my staff have with me has really improved.”

And to quote the Operations Director:

“This training course has been very effective in supporting the launch and embedding of our new behavioural competency framework. We have had excellent feedback from participants about how it has improved both their knowledge and their confidence in supporting behavioural change. Talking in ‘the language of science’ grabbed the attention of our mainly engineering management group and helped them to understand more easily.”