



Case Study: High Performance Leadership Organisation

Summary

Project: To create a high performing leadership and communication organisation that offers members more 'stage time' and opportunities to practise their skills, than any other similar organisation in the UK Surrey and South Eastern region.

Client: An international leadership and communication organisation.

Highest Level of Engagement: Senior Management and international board level, with joint responsibility for the UK and Ireland.

Aims: To create a high performing speaking club that could be modelled by other organisations and used as a benchmark for best practice; to increase confidence levels for those people involved, by honing their communication, presentation and leadership skills.

Positive outcome: The newly created high performing organisation clearly outperformed all other 19 leadership organisations. It shot to the top of the leader board with more goals achieved than any other club in its division, well ahead of the required deadline. It became one of the top 2% of high performing clubs in the UK and Ireland. Membership steadily increased by more than 25% and membership retention was on an upward curve, at 66%. This has left a strong legacy of high performance for future leaders to build on. Costs were 46% below expectations and the organisation started trading three months earlier than planned.

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Overview

The organisation is one of the largest global leadership organisations. It was established for people to gain in confidence by honing their communication, presentation and leadership skills. Originally founded in 1924, its vision was "to create affordable practice and training in the art of public speaking and in

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presiding over meetings, and to promote sociability and good fellowship among its members". There is a growing membership of 280,000 worldwide with 13,500 clubs in 116 countries.



The project brief

There were three parts to this project brief which translated into key goals:

- 1) To set up a new, not for profit speakers club in Purley, greater London, to help individuals and managers in businesses improve their confidence in speaking to larger audiences, as well fine-tuning their overall communication skills.
- 2) To create a high performing club culture giving members more 'stage time' and more speaking opportunities than any other club in Surrey and London, UK.
- 3) To leave a legacy of high performance for other clubs to model as a benchmark for best practice.

To achieve these goals, the project started with a clear vision set by Peter Gerlach from The Gerlach Group and his team:



"To have a highly effective presenter, leader and communicator in every Surrey business and household", which then translated into the clear mission statement:

"Providing a sincere, authentic, supportive and encouraging environment for confident and eloquent communication. Developing leadership that recognises and values the diverse needs and progress of its members".

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Project challenges

Key challenges included:

- keeping set up and running costs low
- gaining 'buy in' and support from other surrounding, potentially competing organisations
- inspiring, leading and motivating seven volunteer committee members in the absence of legitimate power
- sourcing financial back up
- finding a low cost, suitable and reliable venue
- local community acceptance and support
- recruiting a reliable and committed support team.

Timeline and Measure

The goal was to run an introductory meeting by mid-2011 and finish the project by 30th June 2012. This was successfully achieved ahead of time by two months and well under budget by 46 %.

Risks

Initially the following were identified as potential risks:

- insufficient strong external support
- potential change of venue management
- social loafing i.e. people putting in less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when they work alone
- effective teamwork
- group dynamics
- communications
- stakeholder acceptance



- conflict
- cost and finally,
- social facilitation - where people perform better on simple tasks when in the presence of other people rather than when on their own.

Costs

Costs were carefully monitored and were brought in at 46% lower than expected.

Team selection

For the project to run professionally and successfully, it was essential that the right personality types were recruited. Peter Gerlach from The Gerlach Group chose to use the Lumina Leader model as his basis for the team selection. Based on this model he carefully selected the right people with the right attitudes, skills sets and qualifications and allocated them to the relevant posts and positions.

Additionally, for this project to succeed, it needed relevant people resources in experienced and willing members from other clubs to attend meetings, new members to fulfil committee roles and new guests who would eventually become fully paid members.

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders critical to the project success:

- other, potentially competing clubs in the area and division
- the meeting venue owner
- divisional and district leadership teams
- members and guests who all needed to buy into the concept to ensure its success.

Marketing

Marketing and promotion activity was carried out by Peter and his team and included:



- creating regular blogs
- producing third party e-mail communications
- social media marketing e-blasts including using Facebook and Twitter
- promotions through local newspaper features
- price reduction negotiations due to the not-for-profit nature of the website design
- design of a new website and extensive personal networking
- word-of-mouth and viral marketing.

Successful outcome



On the 11th May 2011, the first demonstration meeting was held. Over 30 members and guests attended from other supporting organisations. On 6th April 2012 the project was completed as it had reached 21 fully paid members and was able to become a 'chartered'

club. In May and June 2012 a new committee was voted in to start on 1st July 2012. On this day, the successfully completed project was handed over to a new committee. This transition period took four months until the new committee was fully trained and familiar with its responsibilities to perform well and in line with Toastmaster's global guidelines.

After note

The strengths created by the legacy of Purley Speakers, mean that the club is now the leading, high performing club throughout the entire UK South-East London division having achieved more goals than any other club in the South East division in a very short period of time.



The club was set up and executed within the allotted timeframe and budget, leaving a legacy of high performance, success and commitment for both current and new members to benefit from, and for the area to model.

About 'The Gerlach Group'

The Gerlach Group specialises in building and developing high performance cultures in organisations worldwide.

If you want something that you have never had in your organisation, then you've got to do something you've never done*.

Find out exactly what The Gerlach Group can bring to your organisation. Contact our head office now on +44 (0) 20 8668 2000 or email us at [info \(at\) TheGerlachGroup.com](mailto:info@TheGerlachGroup.com) for a **free, no obligation** 30 minute consultation about your needs.

Companies we've worked with



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