

Transforming organisational culture:

A Case Study in Conversational Leadership

Why

Incommunities embarked on a journey to enhance its organisational culture and leadership practices.

Recognising the need for a cultural shift and improved managerial skills, the company conducted a comprehensive Culture Audit, which revealed key insights from both managers and colleagues highlighting the need for:

- better communication,
- increased managerial support, and;
- a shift towards a coaching leadership style.

What

In response to these findings, in mid-2022 Incommunities partnered with Conversation Space, led by Emily Cosgrove, to develop a bespoke leadership development program named Connected Conversations.

Leveraging Emily's expertise and research on the power of meaningful conversations in driving business success, the program was carefully co-designed and delivered to the executive team. This ensured their buy-in and commitment to championing the program's principles.

A significant decision was made to mix manager cohorts from various departments, breaking down silos and fostering a culture of collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. This intentional strategy led to the creation of a "brave space," where managers felt empowered to share experiences, learn from one another, and build psychological trust.

The Connected Conversations program, spanning two days, focused on strengthening managers' conversational skills through self-awareness and nurturing connected leadership. Incorporating experiential learning exercises, peer-to-peer discussions, and self-reflection activities, the program facilitated measurable personal growth among managers.

The introduction of Connected Learning Groups, in essence action learning sets, furthered this journey for managers. Providing a platform for ongoing peer-to-peer dialogue, reflection, and skill development, to solve work challenges, in a confidential and supportive environment.



Impact

So far, over 60 managers have completed the programme and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to develop self-awareness, conversational skills, and collaboration across departments.

As the lead of the programme, I was personally struck by the openness and energy of our managers to try something different and to really step into “brave space” and be vulnerable!

Manager feedback

“I enjoyed every moment and gained significant resources that will help to develop my conversation skills. It gave me time to reflect how I carry out conversation with my teams using the conversational wisdom framework”.

“It was the first time in my time working at Incommunities that I have been afforded the time to develop and consider my managerial style. I thought it was really beneficial to work with colleagues from other departments as this helped gain a different perspective”.

The success of the Connected Conversations program has highlighted the importance of investing in and developing our managers as key drivers of organisational culture and success.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme, Emily supported us to develop in-house delivery capability and it is now being rolled out by Incommunities' Learning and Leadership specialist, Coleen Greenwood. This transition ensures the continued strengthening of conversational skills and connected leadership, laying the foundation for long-term cultural transformation within the organisation.

Our journey shows how leadership programs that focus on meaningful conversations and collaborative learning can have a significant impact. They help teams talk and work together more effectively. This in turn leads to better customer and colleague experiences.

Written by Helen Chapman, Head of People Experience, Incommunities Ltd

Conversation Space

86-90 Paul Street
Shoreditch
London
EC2A 4NE

W: theconversationspace.com

T: +44 (0)203 700 6870

E: info@theconversationspace.com