

news update

Welcome to the 21st edition of the best value consultancy news update. A monthly news sheet to keep clients and associate consultants informed of what we are undertaking and also our future projects

Efficient, Effective and Economic – the obvious questions



Jacky Edwards is an APSE associate consultant. She has experience of working with front line and support services at a senior level,

and is able to operate effectively as a performance and change consultant, interim manager, project manager, mentor and critical friend. Her key aim is to assist in demonstrating added value in order to gain the respect and support that services deserve from their stakeholders.

We've all heard the comments about consultants borrowing your watch to tell you the time, stating the obvious and then charging you for the privilege. And the BVC response to this is? Well of course there is a grain of truth in this view. Our customers (generally) are the service experts and should know pretty much all that there is to know about their service and how to deliver it. But as another tired saying goes "Do you know what you don't know?" Do you realise the gaps in your knowledge and more importantly do you understand the impact of these gaps on achieving service targets and sustaining service delivery in an increasingly difficult public sector environment?

Maybe you do and you are adequately resourced and able to implement your strategic and service

plans with confidence and a due amount of pride. If so congratulations, we salute you, genuinely, and if you haven't already shared your knowledge and expertise with your local authority colleagues then we encourage you to do so and can offer you opportunities to do this.

But just in case you're not sure, here's a special offer from the BVC. Below are a few easy questions to prompt some thoughts around your ability to evidence and implement an efficient, effective and economic service. Make it interesting, get a pen and award yourself a point for each question answered yes, or with a clear response, a half point for an in part or on the way type response and a minus point for a no or negative response.

1 Do you have a Service Level Agreement with your service users?

2 Have you established in consultation with the customer the performance indicators, costs and remedies for poor performance relevant to their needs?

3 Do you fully understand and agree and control your accounts statements?

4 Including support service costs and central overheads?

5 Do you know and understand how to impact upon service costs?

6 Do you know and regularly review the key processes of your service operation?

7 Do you understand the costs of basic processes and transactions e.g. raising

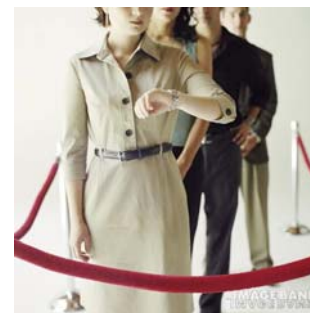
an order, paying invoices?

8 Do you know what your customers think of your services?

9 Do you know what they want from your service for the next 6 months, 12-18 months, 2-3 years, etc?

10 Do you have clear performance targets for every member of your team?

11 Are they pertinent to their responsibilities?



12 Can staff repeat them?

13 How often are they measured?

14 What happens if targets aren't met?

15 Do you regularly consider, via a business case process, alternative ways of delivering your service?

16 Do you have a Business or Service Plan in place?

So now back to those consultants and how they can help you in your challenge for continuous improvement. Guess what? We know how to develop the right questions, how to expand on them and who to ask. More importantly in a busy and demanding work environment we help you make and take the time to ask and respond to the questions. When we have



collected the answers we can support you in analysing the picture that they form and develop an appropriate plan for improvement. In short we are an extra resource, we offer you capacity (we use that watch to give you time) and a vast array of capabilities and of course objectivity and access to a wider network via APSE members and partners.

So go on.....ask us a question!

Shared services

APSE best value consultancy has worked with our legal partners on many occasions providing a comprehensive service to authorities investigating both the business and legal options for future successful and cost effective service delivery. In addition APSE is at the forefront of exploring shared services. Shared services can deliver efficiencies and improve effectiveness. The Cabinet Office estimates that savings of 20% per year can be made through shared services. APSE best value consultancy can help with the challenges that authorities face when trying to negotiate collaborative arrangements.

We are currently working with two local authorities who are considering shared legal services. In the past few years we have also analysed various shared service initiatives and completed appraisals for delivery options. APSE are in a strong position when completing this work thanks to our leading position in local government benchmarking and our network of experienced local government associates.

School meals

In the past two years APSE have worked closely with a number of authorities and partner organisations to look at the current situation with school meals and how it can be

improved. In May 2006 the Government announced new legislation for the nutrient-based and final food-based standards for schools lunches in England.



Subsequently APSE have worked towards this with a number of authorities. For example: the consultancy were part of the pilot of free school meals in three authorities earlier this year; have examined the current situation with and potential of cashless catering systems; and APSE were commissioned by The Department for Children, Schools and Families, to establish a benchmark comparison of food ingredient prices as supplied to school in-house catering providers.

Consequently APSE are at the forefront of local authority catering consultancy, innovation and research. This month we have started another education catering review in a Welsh member authority and we continue to expand our knowledge and expertise in this area.

If you would like to find out more about how the consultancy can help you please contact Andy Mudd on 0161 772 1810 or amudd@apse.org.uk

Interim waste and streetscene managers

Since April 2009 APSE have successfully placed seven interim waste and streetscene managers in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland and our service continues to

grow. We now have over 230 interim managers on our database and we look to match your needs to our interims' skills and experience.

Sample assignments have included mentoring service managers, reviewing waste collections, identifying training needs, sourcing a preferred GPS vehicle tracking supplier, reviewing current trade and food waste collections and developing Health and safety policy and practice. Our interims benefit from all the consultancy resources as



well as APSE's wealth of information and knowledge, such as performance networks.

If you would like to find out more about how interim solutions can help you please contact Alex Gardiner on 0161 772 1810 or by email at agardiner@apse.org.uk

To find out more about how the consultancy can help you, contact:

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