

The Health Professions Council

An organisational “health check”

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Some previous clients:

*National Institute for
Health and Clinical Excellence*



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The health check methodology – key aspects

Burke-Litwin model

- Useful diagnostic tool
- Helps to look at the whole system (not just functions or funding streams)
- Tried and tested model for assessing organisational health
- Particularly useful in looking at capacity for change (blue boxes)

Appreciative inquiry

- Focus on negative emotions/problems leads to a narrowing of thinking (danger with traditional audit approach)
- Focus on positive emotions leads to a broadening and deepening of thinking, which can lead to solutions
- But note the technique will clearly identify the problems too, though indirectly!



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Burke-Litwin Model



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HPC: strong current performance and future challenges

- **Low registration fees for the field**
- **Improving feedback from stakeholders in education and professional bodies**
- **Very positive feedback from Council members on organisation, employees and support provided**
- **Efforts being made to raise public profile**

- **Growth in staff: 25 to 111 in six years**
- **Growth in registrants 4.5% per year, with new professions coming on board**



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Introduction – History...

The overall question set for us by HPC

"How can the HPC retain the positive cultural aspects of being a small organisation, whilst managing a rapid and significant growth over the next few years?"



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What we did

- Interviews with 35 employees and 6 Council members
- Selection of sample by NAO, partially random, partially targeted, to provide coverage of teams and grades
- Analysis using the Burke-Litwin model and Edward de Bono's "Six thinking hats"
- Presentations to EMT and all staff meeting; draft written report
- A representative picture? Your opportunity to comment



Unpicking the question

- What positive cultural aspects does HPC currently have?
- What cultural positives have already been lost or deteriorated through growth and change?
- What cultural positives have been *created* by growth to date?



What positive cultural aspects does HPC currently have?

- Highly motivated employees
- A friendly and relaxed environment
- Non-hierarchical structure and attitude
- Positive feedback and honesty
- Buy-in to organisational values and mission
- Employees embrace change
- Energy and loyalty from employees
- Confidence in the leadership of the organisation



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What cultural positives have been lost or deteriorated already?

- People no longer 'know everyone'
- Inter-departmental interaction less easy, so it happens less
- More difficult to find appropriate contacts (potentially affecting efficiency and customer service)
- Employees have less individual exposure to senior management
- Less out-of-hours socialising



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What cultural positives have been brought about by growth to date?

- More formal internal policies and standards
- More efficient task management e.g. processing registrations,
- Better working structure within departments
- Strong project work
- Recruitment of external expertise
- Initially, opportunities for career development



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The challenge

- What can be kept?
- What cannot be kept and how can it be replaced?
- What should not be kept?

'The friendly family feeling won't be lost if properly managed. We need to maintain an organisation that has a vision that people feel a part of. If you look at any successful organisation they've got that employee support.'



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We recommend, to consolidate and build on a healthy culture, HPC focus on:

- Leaders taking the employees along with them on strategy
- Clearly supporting and valuing *all* staff
- Building middle management capacity
- Increasing inter-departmental interaction and understanding, for clear business reasons
- Understanding and addressing motivational factors in the changing organisation
- Continuing to aim for excellence, “to be the best”



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External Environment

“Macro”

- Regulatory backdrop e.g. “reducing the burden”
- Increased public interest in risks in healthcare
- Customer service expectations in the era of internet banking etc
- Changes in higher education sector; volume of students and places

“Micro”

- Lack of direct control over future workload and possible legislation
- Benchmarking/competition with other regulators; oversight by CHRE
- Little public knowledge of HPC – how important?
- Gaps in (new) registrants’ understanding of what HPC does or why they pay fees



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Leadership

- Role and personality of Chief Executive is key to setting the tone
- Strong leadership by the President has made major difference to Council as a body and its relations with employees
- The Council and EMT have matured and are now highly effective
- EMT sometimes lack visibility
- Not always clear that leaders are aware of pressure points



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Mission and Strategy

- Council and employees at all levels share an understanding of mission and values
- All are excited about taking on new work
- But much less shared understanding of the strategy and some anxiety about this
- A need to communicate more about not just what you are going to do, but *how you are going to do it.*



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Organisational culture

- Still relatively non-hierarchical
- 'Can-do' attitude and sharing of challenges
- Devolved authority; shared responsibility – most employees feel trusted
- Lots of communication though not always the right information
- Sense of unity/family, though this is under threat



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Management Practices

- Managers encourage employees to be innovative
- But...**
- Middle managers lack experience and confidence
 - Lack of clarity and consistency in their roles and responsibilities
 - Perception of inconsistency or possible unfairness in management practices, policy application
 - Emerging contrasts between Registrations and the rest



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Work unit climate

Feelings about working here include:

- “Positive, friendly, relaxed, ambitious and hard working”
- Like the location, new building and environment
- Social aspects are important
- Want more inter-departmental interaction
- Some lack of confidence in service from other departments



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Motivation

Five factors have helped build goodwill, energy and commitment:

1. ‘Amazing’ benefits
2. Friendly work climate with positive personal interactions
3. Opportunities to progress
4. Affection for HPC and commitment to the shared purpose
5. Sense of improving performance and good feedback from stakeholders, plus an exciting future

However...

- Erosion of no. 3; and increased pressure on nos. 4 and 5 caused by workload, anxiety about future, separation of teams and less social interaction. Especially for Registrations team.
- Nos 1 and 2 are not enough on their own.
- Need to be clear about motivators and consider how to replace what is lost



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