

Lifecycle UK case study – broadening income and resource base

Background

Life Cycle UK is a unique organisation that helps people take up cycling. Our belief is that people want to cycle but are held back by lack of knowledge, concerns about safety or simply by being unsure of how to begin. Overcome those obstacles and people will take to their bikes and enjoy the benefits.

Life Cycle UK aims to inspire people and to equip them with the skills, the knowledge and the confidence to make cycling part of their everyday lives. We run practical activities such as cycle training, we organise awareness-raising events, we provide help with bike maintenance, we provide cycle maps and other literature, and we organise conferences and seminars.

Motivations for involvement in C3

- Lifecycle UK staff had identified that they wanted to increase their income base and work towards becoming a social enterprise. They knew they needed to develop a strong business plan to make this transition.
- They were also aware that they needed to improve a number of elements of the organisation and wanted to address these areas as a part of their planning process. They decided that a performance review would be a good place to start.

Process

- Training session on the process and key concepts of performance improvement with all staff.
- Self-assessment using C3Perform with all core staff over two sessions (approx 6 hours)
- Action planning session for three hours.

Improvements made

The most significant outcome was to increase trading income from 82,000 in 2005/6 to 140,000 in 2006/7. This represents an increase of 58%. Self-generated income now constitutes 76% of all income compared to 46% last year.

This increase has been achieved through a program of work to review products and services and their pricing structure to improve efficiency and profitability. This meant that some services were scrapped and others reviewed in line with customer feedback to

improve quality. Two examples are; The 4 session Bike Maintenance Workshop (BMW) has been changed to a one day session in line with feedback and is now much more popular. Bookings on the monthly sessions are now full. 20 Doctor Bike sessions were held last year, 60 will be held by the end of this year.

Other improvements made included, writing a business plan, Improving financial systems, Improving roles, responsibilities and reporting systems for finances, and implementing a quarterly reporting meeting to discuss financial and performance targets, securing funding for two new projects from two separate funding bodies.

Feedback from participants.

'We have learnt that we're flexible and that's why we're still here, that we're a great organisation and we have a lot to offer. We need to have the courage to keep reinventing ourselves, not changing our fundamental mission but being flexible about what we do to achieve it'.

'The performance review helped identify what we needed to sort out and helped us to write a business plan. It was essential to look at what was and wasn't working and helped to ensure that the business planning process was successful and effective.'

Next Steps

The performance review and business planning period has been an intensive period for the organisation and they are starting to see the benefits. They consider it too early to do a review of the organisation again after 12 months but will plan to conduct a shorter review possibly using Workshop Perform in December or January (after about 18 months).