

CASE STUDY

COSTAIN: ENABLING EMPLOYEES TO CREATE THEIR OWN 'GOOD JOBS'

Use of a twice-yearly stand-down day to begin; Group-wide, organisational focus on job design, including line management support and the application of the principles behind 'Eliminating Harm', plus the implementation of new tools borne from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

Costain improves people's lives by delivering integrated, leading-edge, smart infrastructure solutions to meet national needs across the UK's energy, water, transportation, and defence markets.

There is a whole-organisation approach to mental health and wellbeing, with a nationwide impact, having numerous projects and offices spread across the country.

After signing the Mental Health at Work Commitment (MHaWC) in 2019, gap analysis of the business was undertaken to determine the required actions to meet the six standards within the MHaWC. The pandemic placed renewed emphasis on job design, a key aspect of Standard Two which is the foundation of mental health and wellbeing work at Costain.

Alongside a flexible working policy, Costain promotes an informal, 'dynamic working' approach focusing on wellbeing, productivity, and performance. It allows individuals to manage



their work life balance and supports the drive to 'Eliminate Harm', specifically through the design process and a review of job design aligned with the expectations of Standard Two. COVID-19 accelerated this programme, and it was imperative that Costain engaged with the workforce to obtain their feedback on work design, organisational structure, working conditions and personal needs.

Using the 'Leadership Impact Day' in April 2020 and data from a wellbeing survey, insights were proactively gathered from the workforce, clients, and supply chain to analyse how people were feeling and targeted action was taken to help people thrive.

What Costain did



In April 2020, Costain was responding to change, adapting job design at pace. As offices closed and sites were operating at reduced capacity with strict social distancing, the company had to think differently about job environments and make the dynamic working approach the new 'normal'. Making what was once viewed as impossible, possible, has in many ways accelerated the approach to dynamic working and broken down perceived barriers.

With colleagues split between working remotely and working on site, it was imperative to listen to all employees, recognising that the pandemic was affecting everybody differently and there is no 'one size fits all approach' to mental health and wellbeing.

An engagement campaign was delivered using the anonymous group-wide 'Your Wellbeing' employee survey coupled with a 'Leadership Impact Day' a twice-yearly event to engage the whole organisation, clients, and supply chain. The tried and tested format is a series of leader-led discussions focusing on one theme in a planned and interactive way. Sessions are held on all contracts and office locations. Thought leadership is shared and feedback obtained to enhance operations. The feedback from the survey and impact day were analysed to identify common concerns and informed the company's approach to meet the expectations of MHaWC standard two.

In April, a 'Social Distancing and your Wellbeing' Leadership Impact Day was held. The aim was to review job design and understand how to keep teams engaged and mentally positive.

The guided discussions helped Costain to understand what behaviours employees required from their line manager and how wellbeing and mental health could be factored into job design.

A whole organisation approach was taken to wellbeing and an invite for the Leadership Impact Day was extended to clients and the supply chain. This provided an opportunity for everyone working for, and with Costain, to provide feedback on working conditions and culture at each specific

location. This helped to improve mental health and wellbeing, allowing everyone to be at their best.

Impact

Twenty Leadership Impact Day sessions were held across the organisation and almost 1,400 people completed the Your Wellbeing Survey.

A working group was established to analyse the data from the Survey and the anecdotal feedback from the Impact Day using the MHaWC as the foundation. An action plan was developed to enhance the support and wellbeing offerings available to colleagues.

The outputs were varied, although there was consistent agreement on behavioural traits being discussed. With input from the Costain Behavioural Management Team, these are now being implemented into the company's line manager toolkits.

"WITHIN CASE MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS, A NUMBER OF MANAGERS HAVE ACCOMMODATED ADJUSTED WORKING HOURS, JOB ROLES, OR ADJUSTED DUTIES. THEY HAVE BEEN A GOOD POINT OF CARE AND CONTACT FOR THEIR DIRECT REPORTS."

A 'Ways to Thrive' guidance document was produced to provide details of the dynamic working approach. Survey data showed that post-pandemic, 92% of respondents would like to work from home at least one day per week. To support this shift to having a more dynamic workforce, Costain has produced several enablers that help to inform current and future job design and promote a more agile culture. One of the key enablers is the Thrive Plans. Developed for individuals and teams, they ensure that line managers and their teams are having regular conversations to understand what each team member needs to be able to thrive at work. In addition, our Personal Energy Management Charter and associated plans offer further support, providing a framework to help create a more connected, productive workplace

where colleagues are mentally and physically well, and performing at their best every day.

The regular wellbeing surveys are being used to help to transition into a new way of working post-pandemic. This helps to identify any actions that need to be taken to ensure teams remain productive and well. There is demonstrable action planned to provide further support for line managers in recognition of the integral part that they play in workplace wellbeing. This includes enhancing their knowledge of wellbeing services and supports to facilitate signposting, behavioural awareness, and considerations for leading and managing in a virtual world.

The whole-organisation approach to wellbeing will also impact on the supply chain. Costain is committed to supporting members of the supply chain with alignment to the MHaW commitment.

"AT EVERY TEAM MEETING MY COLLEAGUES HAVE ALWAYS ASKED

AND LISTENED TO HOW EVERYONE IS. TEAM MEETINGS, CLIENT MEETINGS, 1:2:1S, LUNCH AND LEARNS – THE FIRST TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS ALWAYS 'HOW ARE YOU?', 'ARE YOU OKAY?', 'HOW ARE THINGS GOING?', WITH CARE AND ATTENTION TAKEN REGARDING THE RESPONSE. THEY HAVEN'T JUST BEEN EMPTY WORDS OR GREETINGS."

Call to action

Effectively engage with the workforce by not only asking the questions, but actively listening and responding to feedback.

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