

CFO Tom Carroll

COMMENTS ON THE RE-INDUCTION PROGRAMME “IT’S YOUR JOB” RECENTLY COMPLETED IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

During a Change Management Seminar our management team identified that key to the success of modernisation was the communication of key messages. Had we really explained to staff what modernisation was all about? We had talked about it in loose terms but what did it really mean to people? Did people on fire stations, in fire control and offices understand where we were going as a service? The conclusion was, that despite our best efforts there was still a need to do more to effectively communicate the changes. A small team was formed and asked to consider a programme of re-induction for all staff, something that would get people thinking about, and involved with, shaping the new fire and rescue service.

It was clear that a more imaginative and creative approach was required. A way to bring to life what modernisation should mean to our service and the people that deliver it. Having developed ideas around an interactive role play session, a partner to work with us was sought. Dramanon, a specialist training company, who had been working locally with Cambridgeshire Constabulary was approached.

In conjunction with Dramanon an interactive session was developed. It was decided to convey a debate between firefighters and a potential recruit, about an array of issues connected to modernisation. A structured discussion around corporate issues was to follow, with a further examination of local matters conducted by local managers. A programme of visits to key fire stations was established with full involvement with relevant managers.

A total of 30 sessions were provided with the centrepiece being the role-play. The actors portraying the firefighters were extremely effective in bringing to life the issues in a way that people could relate to. In particular the actors’ accuracy in role, and skill in portrayal struck a chord with people. Dramanon’s facilitated approach was then able to delve into the issues, draw positive feelings from progress made and then look at the future. People were encouraged to talk about the tangible benefits and the value of modernisation. The local managers were then in a position to make the links to local plans and encourage involvement with future plans.

Throughout the development and rollout of the programme, Dramanon was able to understand and get under the skin of what needed to be done. The role-play was the real catalyst to the engagement of people, and the professionalism of Dramanon was key to that. The programme was being delivered at the time of the CPA and it was noted by the CPA team as an innovative role-play and discussion training package to engage with staff about changes and modernisation.

A firefighter participating in one of the sessions took the time to record the following “I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Dramanon production delivered to the watch recently. I thought the play was excellently well-written and delivered and contained some very thought provoking content. I also believe that using this style of delivery to generate discussion and ideas about the changes we

face in the modern fire service will be very successful and empowering for our personnel. I have no doubt that members of the service will be able to relate to the characters in the play and have strong opinions regarding their attitudes. I am confident that as the production tours the county it will adapt and mould itself, building on both positive and negative experiences to enhance its impact. I also hope that it enables the Service as a whole to move forward together in what will be a difficult and uncertain future. Please could you extend my thanks to the members of the Dramanon Company and I wish all involved the very best for their future presentations”.

I would commend our approach to effective communications with people over these difficult issues and endorse Dramanon as a skilled and valuable business partner.