

Helping a National Dental Care Business to Grow

The Client Organisation

Oasis Healthcare: Creating a solution to help implement change

Today, Oasis has over 200 practices across the UK, with over 700 dentists and 2,000 staff delivering high quality dentistry across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Oasis vision is to transform dentistry in the UK by creating the national dental care brand of choice. They are investing in new facilities and upgrading existing practices, so that as many people as possible will be able to benefit from their commitment to high quality dental care in a relaxed environment.

As a people focused organisation, Oasis is committed to not only ensuring that their patients receive quality clinical care, but that their professionals are fully supported and also benefit from their unique structure and vision.

“Working with the Creating Strategic Solutions team has enabled the Oasis Executive Group to develop and implement changes that have made a substantive difference to our organisational performance”

Marketing and Practice Development Director, Oasis Healthcare Ltd.

The Brief

Oasis Healthcare faced business strategy challenges that needed to be managed to allow for accelerated growth. Oasis Healthcare had experienced very rapid growth through a successful acquisitions policy and needed to deal effectively with the pace of change in this high performing business sector, and, as such, required support on how to manage the complexity and uncertainty it was facing. The external business environment was one of binding financial constraints, such that the organisation needed clear strategic development to ensure access to venture capital which would secure business sustainability and accelerate growth.

The project required facilitation of a three day offsite event, by the *Creating Strategic Solutions* team (CSS) of De Montfort University (January 2009) and subsequently a two day event in May 2010, with numerous development support meetings in between. The aim was to hold a workshop event with the senior executive management team, working towards alignment on strategic business objectives, and the development of an action plan with associated budgeting concerns.

The O.R. Solution

Problem Structuring Methods (PSM), an area of soft operational research (O.R.), were used in both facilitation events. The research on soft O.R. shows that PSM have the capacity to deal with messy and complex problems by structuring the issues under examination. Once issues are structured, a group can then move forward, as a key by-product of the process is the collective buy-in from the whole management team. Given the need for Oasis to develop group consensus, the project was undertaken using “causal mapping” software known as Decision Explorer® through use of a mobile computer laboratory.

The Benefits

The project was undertaken at a crucial stage of the company's development. A well thought out holistic 12 month strategic plan was required to secure funding from the parent company. On completion of the 3 day workshop the senior management team were able to present a clear and transparent business case that led to them securing additional funding resulting in the expansion of the company.

In terms of internal stakeholder understanding (the senior management team), the collective process of the project has helped to build better rules of operation within the team. They no longer work in their individual silos of operation and a marked improvement within team dynamics was noted (this is captured quantitatively in post-event questionnaires on team working). The overall process has helped to enhance synergistic gains from team working. This has also fed through to the relationships with key stakeholders throughout the organisation.

In terms of societal impact, the ensured business

success of the organisation will provide economic benefits of secured employment to its workforce. With over 200 premises nationally Oasis Healthcare is a significant employer. The improved processes in operation subsequent to the project have enabled the continued expansion of the business to other parts of the UK. Expansion into Northern Ireland for the provision of dental care has taken place effectively since the project was completed.



Dr Ashley Carreras (centre) and Parmjit Kaur (shown left) Principal Lecturers from Leicester Business School delivering a **Creating Strategic Solutions** workshop with Oasis Healthcare.

This process facilitation allows a tailored consultancy service that delivers to the clients' specific needs. CSS provides a workshop based facilitated process which is solution focused. We will undertake pre-event problem definition with principal stakeholders, as this ensures the workshop event concludes with a clear strategy and implementation plan. CSS can work in partnership with your organisation to deliver best practice. Please contact us on; pkcor@dmu.ac.uk and acarreras@dmu.ac.uk