



LONDON UNDERGROUND LIMITED REW - GAUGING REACTION

“management found it difficult to understand the real concerns of the work-force”

“provide staff with the information that they needed”

“agreed to negotiate a ‘contract’ with the management team”

“returns of over 70%”

“subsequently adopted as a key part of the communications strategy”

Situation:

For a variety of reasons, some historical, the relationship between the staff of REW, their trades unions and the management team were very difficult. Communication between management and the shopfloor tended to be one way and ineffective. As a consequence, management found it difficult to understand the real concerns of the workforce, whilst the workforce had a very skewed view of what management were actually trying to achieve. Staff within REW had already recognised some of the issues and had initiated a communications campaign.

Client requirement:

REW management asked *The Solutions Organisation* to develop a mechanism that would provide staff with the information that they needed, in order to understand how plans being made might affect them. At the same time it would also need to let the managers know which issues were of most concern to staff.

Solutions:

Using the project title “Gauging Reaction” our consultants facilitated a number of focus group meetings where staff were asked to identify and prioritise their issues and concerns. We agreed to negotiate a ‘contract’ with the management team who would promise to provide answers to every question asked. In return, the members of the groups would work with managers to help us achieve a high return rate.

We turned the lists of issues into a set of questions for management and had this validated by each of the focus groups. Managers then provided an answer for each question. The questions and their answers were compiled into a questionnaire - for each question and answer we asked whether the issue was considered important, whether the answer was understood, whether the answer was considered full and honest and whether it was considered satisfactory. The questionnaire was issued to all staff and we worked with our focus groups and their managers to develop strategies to ensure a high rate of return. We achieved returns of over 70%, where in the past 30% would have been considered good.

Outcomes and Benefits:

For the first time the workforce had complete answers to every issue of importance to them. Managers were able to gauge whether the answers provided needed further clarification and those issues that needed further consideration. *The Solutions Organisation* provided an impartial bridge between the two parties and ensured that both kept to their side of the contract. The whole exercise was considered a success by all parties and was subsequently adopted as a key part of the communications strategy.