

Case Study

Discover how creating one vision and one culture can improve your organisation

Identifying the issues

Gateshead Council wished to tackle their major challenging agenda – transformation of their whole organisation in order to accelerate the pace of change, deal with a harsh financial climate, clarify their priorities and motivate and enthuse their staff.

Intervention

Gateshead called in Strategic Solutions Ltd to provide an innovative creative event for 200 of their most senior managers to help them work faster, smarter and become leaner. Strategic Solutions Ltd suggested using music and particularly jazz as a metaphor for organisational change. In a jazz ensemble every player is a soloist as well as part of the ensemble and the music is picked up by individual soloists and jammed. This is expected and encouraged by all members of the group and allows a different way of working together. There is no one person in overall leadership. It also has to be done quickly in the moment often at speed and intuitively picking up the thoughts and ideas of other members of the ensemble without words being spoken or music written down.

For Gateshead there was a clear analogy between this concept and learning new ways of working together on their challenging agenda. The venue was *Gateshead Little Theatre* which is a purpose built theatre dating back to the 1920s originally set up by *the Progressive Players*, it is testament to the way in which a community can create and manage a community resource for itself. Performances at the little Theatre are amateur productions are sell outs and the theatre has been continuously maintained since the 1920s and remains a key resource.

Paramount to the success of the event was the choice of musician. *Pete Churchill who is Professor of Jazz Composition at the Royal Academy of Music*. He is also a world renowned, arranger, singer and educator much in demand at international festivals and events. He used his enormous skill in enabling others learning.

A keynote speech from *Chief Executive, Roger Kelly*, provided an inspirational start to the day He touched on the challenges which everyone faced and gave an energetic and upbeat start to the morning. The event was then jointly facilitated by Sheila Stokes White & Pete Churchill.

Benefits

Feedback was incredible. An overwhelmingly positive experience. Had the immediate effect of forging one culture for the organisation and created an enormous feel good factor which has lasted. This was the subject of a presentation at the European Mentoring and Coaching Council Conference in Dublin in November 2010 where again it was wonderfully well received.