

Casestudy: Transforming the Operations

a) The challenge:

The [Independent Police Complaints Commission \(IPCC\)](#) was formed in 2004 to investigate the most serious complaints against the police and appeals against police response to complaints. Formed on a regional basis, it needed to change its way of organising and working to become a national agency and become more responsive to its customers including complainants, police forces and other agencies.

The IPCC required external assistance to make change happen. The requirement was to support the organisation to restructure the top team, to help design a new organisation and to develop the change team and a brand for the change programme that reflected a more customer-focussed organisation. This strategic project was designed and implemented by Piers Thurston and Jonathan Pilgrim founders of [Making Change Work](#), a behavioural change consultancy.

In addition to these organisational requirements, demand had started to outstrip capacity, so any change needed to build capacity and make real savings to enable the IPCC to confidently negotiate the impact of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review with the Home Office.

IPCC Chief Executive, Jane Furniss recognised that only a radical approach would do. *“We needed to improve the way we delivered our services to make them more efficient and effective for our customers. The result of any change needed to be value for money, sustainable and contribute to the overall purpose of the IPCC to improve public confidence in the police complaints system.”*

To support the work of Piers and Jonathan, Ian Crawford from [Sequena](#) a specialist transformation consultancy and an established Making Change Work partner was invited to contribute. Jane describes the results of the project in relation to her stated requirements above, *“When you need a transformation in operational performance, you need to win the hearts and minds of staff and this is exactly what our consultant’s approach helped us to achieve. With their expert facilitation and motivation, we delivered a fundamental change in thinking and behaviour that promises to deliver value on a sustainable basis.”*

b) The consulting solution

The consultants proposed a 3-stage learning partnership with strategic intent but no pre-determined outcome focusing on three areas: bringing robust challenge to the habitual ways of working within the 4 regions, agreeing a ‘Transformation Roadmap’ for change and transferring change management skills. The [Making Change Work consulting](#) approach includes many cutting edge technologies to ensure change is both appropriate and sustainable and one of these is *LASER™* - Lean Approach to Service Evaluation and Re-engineering, which became the basis of the capacity-building project.

c) Workshops – bringing new life to conversations

17 capacity-building workshops were conducted over 6 months to May 2010, where 50 staff of all grades through to Director, representing all IPCC departments, regions and roles took part. The IPCC/consulting team agreed an aim - to create an intuitive, spontaneous, collaborative and dialogue-based energy for change:

Starting the story: we engaged in a different type of conversation – with consultants asking [Clean Language \(CL\)](#) ‘developing questions’ constraining their assumptions, allowing everyone to ‘have a voice’, developing people’s confidence to challenge the patterns that sustain habitual ways of working.

We looked for opportunities for more conversations (but not for answers – yet) to make sense of the complexity in investigations and find what connects us, provoking ‘ah-ha’ moments of insight. Throughout the project the IPCC/consulting team asked several key questions at the end of each workshop including, ‘what knowledge had been generated, why is it important and what difference did it make?’ This established an inquiring frame where team members would reflect on their required outcome and discuss the workshop with colleagues during the week, continuing the challenging dialogue between workshops. We also asked each in workshop, ‘what value did we bring and is this what we want?’ As fees were paid by results, these were important measures.

Visioning: the IPCC/consulting team both supported and challenged themselves, disturbing and confronting people’s attachment to control, certainty and unbroken patterns of behaviour/habits. We used a strength-based change approach [Appreciative Inquiry \(AI\)](#), which focuses on what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn’t. It is the opposite of problem solving. Integrating AI and CL together with [Symbolic Modelling](#), the IPCC/consulting team captured many stories of strengths and successes in photographs, drawings and plasticine models - metaphors that coalesced into an AI ‘provocative proposition’ describing a future IPCC.

This IPCC-centric ‘provocative proposition’ was then challenged using [Clean Space](#). People ‘stood in the shoes’ of different IPCC stakeholders, to empathise with police, complainants, Commissioners etc. to test their IPCC-centric proposition from different and sometimes conflicting perspectives. A ‘line-of-power’ Clean Space exercise initiated a major disturbance in their thinking that provoked deep reflection on the team’s relationship with a critical stakeholder and was pivotal in shaping the future state. Combining these methodologies to respond to the team’s emerging knowledge of themselves and their many and varied relationships enabled staff to gain real understanding of how IPCC structures and processes could affect, for better or worse, someone’s experience of an IPCC investigation.

Completing the story: Finally, the whole team created a single ‘provocative proposition’ and CL ‘metaphor landscape’ for change. These were tested to understand the effects they would produce and we examined the necessary conditions for change maturing the new thinking, showing all the relationships, inside and outside the future IPCC. Throughout, we had used an innovative modelling tool, enabling people to visualise radical new possibilities.

The tool captured memorable and inspirational records of conversations - at the speed of the dialogue, converting them into robust and detailed lean-based operational processes models and business cases with detailed costs, benefits and timescales. This created an audit trail that mapped the dialogue from an idea in a workshop to the 'Transformation Roadmap' and benefits realisation. The immediacy of this approach generated energy and achieved a deep engagement from everyone both in and between workshops.

d) Outcomes

These reflective, generative and energising approaches increased trust and organisational alignment by creating meaning from success stories and confirming the need for change. The formal and socially constructed boundaries and power relationships had been challenged and a more empathetic understanding shaped the future state IPCC. The emergent nature of the approach enabled people to become more aware of their own responsibilities and their relationships, which has led to almost all of the 50 people on the team volunteering to use these approaches on other projects. This LASER™ approach is based on [Action Research](#) and has enabled the IPCC to introduce substantial and sustainable change.

LASER™ does not plan the change, it is the change.

e) References from Directors who were involved in the project

"We re-engineered our operational processes identifying potential savings > 8% of annual budget. This was achieved through an innovative engagement between consultants, Casework staff and other key stakeholders (e.g. legal advisers) who were encouraged to develop images and narratives of the future service. This was beneficial as it separated people's particular current role and circumstances from the envisioned outcome; creating a focus on the bigger picture and greater clarity on what we wanted to achieve. Working with the consultants gave us an impetus to leverage these approaches across other functions – streamlining human capital, customer service delivery and how we approach the work per se. We expect this will provide us with significant efficiencies. Other benefits will include a greater co-ordination of work, shared knowledge across the organisation and an appetite for change within the Directorate. We achieved all this in 6 workshops."

David Knight, Director, Casework and Customer Services (Board Member)

Every investigation has its own unique requirements and each region had varying approaches to investigations but at the heart of this work is a series of critical decisions. The consultants helped us to better understand and work within this complexity without losing the critical professional ability to take difficult, sensitive and potentially life-changing decisions. Given the breadth of ages, experience, grade and roles of people from the 4 regions involved in the project, I was impressed by the team's ability to challenge the norm and to consider completely new and innovative ways of working. The subsequent change in how we approach our work and the sheer amount of change implemented across the Directorate is testament to their hard work and dedication

Moir Stewart, Director of Investigations (Board Member)

f) Business results

(i) Increased productivity:

Investigations	2009/10	May-Oct 2010/11	Overall improvement
Average number per month:	was 16.25	increased to 30	85% more investigations
Independent investigations as % of total started:	was 43%	increased to 60%	40% more independent investigations
Investigations completed within target time:	was 48%	increased to 63%	31% more on-target completions
Average time to complete:	was 202 days	decreased to *164 days	19% faster completions

*Includes those started prior to May (many started since May complete in days or weeks!)

In addition, the backlog of outstanding managed investigations has decreased from 135 to 70 since May 2010.

(ii) Reduction in unit cost:

The number of Investigating Officers is unchanged and productivity has improved, providing greater capacity to meet the expected rising trend in demand, without additional costs:

- Unit cost in independent investigations lowered by 67% = savings of £30,000 per investigation
- Unit cost in managed investigations lowered by 53% = savings of £9,000 per investigation

(iii) Savings from process improvements:

Casework process improvements in 2010/11 will save 10% of the budget, well above the 6% project target, and rises to 18% in 2013/14.

(iv) Project return on investment: 2 months.

Qualitative results

- (i) A national organisation.
- (ii) An improvement in the quality of final reports.
- (iii) Skills and knowledge transfer have brought to life 'new conversations' among IPCC staff who are planning further improvements and savings.
- (iv) More balanced relationships with stakeholders, particularly the larger and more powerful police services such as the Metropolitan Police.

- (v) Thanks from external stakeholders, such as Coroners and the Crown Prosecution Service, as a result of improved customer care and early coordination.

g) Lessons learned

- Welcome sceptics with open arms – they bring energy and passion to your proceedings and will introduce valuable insights that could form the basis for new approaches.
- Dare to be different and don't be afraid to challenge traditional policies, working practices and ways of organising – there is huge value to be gained in disturbing thinking and behaviour.
- Business process improvement is about people understanding 'the whole process', discussing changes empathetically and taking ownership of new processes and their outcomes.

“The IPCC/consultant relationship has been absolutely integral to the cooperative approach – no-one’s interests came first with power being shared equally and outputs produced and evaluated together. With the answer being ‘in the room’, there is a high degree ownership of the solution by IPCC staff – a critical requirement for sustainable benefits realisation.”

Dylan Clayson, *CONNECT Programme Manager*

“The consultants’ flexibility created an atmosphere of real engagement, ideas were freely shared and debated during workshops. They deliberately shared power with us, allowing them to undertake a number of roles; where individuals needed encouragement of their ideas, they coached and where there was a difference of view, they supported different perspectives.”

Jason Taylor, Head of Change and Customer Service

MCA 2011 Award - Highly Commended

This project was first shortlisted then Highly Commended coming second only to the likes of IBM, KPMG, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, P A Consulting and Atkins Global in the [Management Consultancy Association \(MCA\) 2011 Awards](#) in the following categories:

- Operational Performance in the Public Sector
- Change Management in the Public Sector

About the MCA

The Management Consultancies Association (MCA) is the representative body for management consultancy firms in the UK. The 55 member companies comprise around 70% of the UK consulting industry, estimated to be worth £8bn in 2009, employ more than 40,000 consultants and work with over 90 of the top FTSE 100 companies and almost all parts of the public sector.