

## A case study – Supporting cultural change through workspace design

**Potential2Achieve** was engaged to support the implementation of an initiative designed to create a new way of working to bring about efficiencies in a customer facing department of a blue-chip UK financial services organisation. The cultural change programme was designed to improve working practices through the most effective use of the workspace utilising existing technology. The organisation set ambitious and aspirational aims for its workplace programme including a review of its UK office portfolio combined with the opportunity to define new ways of working within a more modern and efficient environment.

The role undertaken by **Potential2Achieve** was as a programme manager supporting both the client and the real estate services provider. The real estate services provider was engaged to design and develop the concept of moving beyond 1:1 desking in order to maximise the use of space within the client property portfolio, thereby enabling the release of fixed assets and costs from the balance sheet.

The impact on employees was a requirement to give up personal desks and pedestals in favour of hot desking and having 1 desk for every 1.2 employees. This needed to be achieved with minimal disruption to customer facing environments and with employees fully engaged with the new way of working. The overall objective was to improve space utilisation while using the existing limited technology platforms and to consolidate staff from three buildings into one.

Successful implementation was achieved by working in partnership with the client's in-house Property, IT and Business Heads to:

- Create a new strategic approach, which enabled flexibility depending on the nature of the business impacted but also achieved consistency and fairness across all business areas.
- Encompass existing working requirements - 54% of employees spent more than 50% of their time doing desk based activities.
- Flex ratios ranging between 1:1.18 to 1:1.39 where due to IT constraints up to 33% of desks were classed as fixed users.
- Create a cultural shift from "my desk" to "our team space", enable options to do more remote working and for senior executives a move from office to open plan desks. **Potential2Achieve** facilitated the necessary behavioural change through group training sessions, and on a 1:1 basis as required, to support the smooth transition and to enable better management of remote working.
- Gain agreement to new desk layouts, costs and communications to enable achievement of the overall cost reduction and development of a standard approach for roll out across the business.
- Design new flexible team layouts creating team neighbourhoods with proximity to colleagues working together most often but without allocating specific desks.

The outcome created immediate value for the client through a:

- 22% reduction in property recharge costs.
- Successful implementation of the new way of working, measured by no negative impact on current levels of customer service, productivity or staff attrition rates.
- Change in focus by key leaders to recognise and reward outputs not presenteeism.
- Positive improvement in leadership behaviours, particularly cross team working and ad-hoc coaching, this was partly due to senior execs being more visible but primarily resulted from a change in behaviour.