



Inspiring Change in the Sussex Contracting Landscape

A LSIS Resource Utilisation Project



Who are we?

- BHTA – the host provider for the project. A small independent provider led by their MD and chair of SCTP, Connie Mahony.
- Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) – a network of 58 work-based learning providers managed by Executive Director (ED), Paul Mitchell.



Impact

- From an investment of £42k estimated savings from the project are £470k.
- Saved via cost reduction in SFA management and OFSTED inspection costs (eight out of 44 providers will no longer be in lead arrangements from 1st August 2011).
- ...and from the benefits of collaboration in reducing provider delivery and management costs.



Why this project?

- An early response to SFA Minimum Contract Levels (MCL) Policy
- Support for SCTP members in strategic planning
- Brokering new collaboration and partnerships
- A managed rationalisation of the network where all members retain access to funding streams
- Unlocking the ability to improve quality and cut costs via collaboration



What did we do? (1)

- Decided that SCTP's role was NOT to become a lead provider but a broker to support member collaboration.
- ED contacted all affected SCTP members to raise awareness re MCL and visited those who required further discussion or were affected most (25 meetings).
- ED linked with SFA account managers to provide consistent approach and ensure latest information was available in a fast-changing policy landscape



What did we do? (2)

- Identify potential matches where providers could potentially work together.
- MCL networking event open to all SCTP members.
- Subcontracting seminar led by Nick Linford.
- Discussions with lead providers regarding the expansion/formation of contracting hubs

What Worked Well (1)

- Working through a provider network enabled new collaborations to build from existing relationships.
- Brokering carried out 1:1 by a known independent person was effective as there was trust and no vested interest.
- Credibility secured via the regular communication of up to date information involving SFA.
- Regular open communication – a ‘no surprises’ culture.



The BOND Partnership

The story of one emerging provider collaboration:

Lookfantastic

BHTA

SIGTA

Employee Development Forum

Swim UK

What Worked Well (2)

- Sound collaborative partnerships built on:
 - strong existing relationships and trust
 - business offers that were mainly collaborative rather than competitive
 - partners that had compatible organisational culture & strategies
 - partners creating compatible IT/data systems
 - partners willing to address difficult issues first
 - keeping external agencies informed
 - recognition of collaboration as a positive business strategy

Things To Avoid

- Never assume that the collaborative process is on track – make sure it is.
- Don't delay addressing the tough stuff.
- Never break a confidence.
- Don't go it alone – get expert advice.
- Don't be negative – be realistic – focus on the benefits of collaboration.

Good Luck!