



## **NewMindsets Case Study**

### **Action-driven leadership development in healthcare organizations**

© NewMindsets 2004

#### ***The Situation and Project Objectives:***

Healthcare organizations, whether hospitals or special service institutions, face major challenges in upgrading leadership skills and the management and teamwork competencies of staff at all levels. The problems are compounded by busy schedules which tend to make people regard professional development in these areas as luxuries rather than necessities, and as something that can be "put on the back burner" because of urgent problems of the day. To overcome the difficulties NewMindsets is involved in a series of projects that integrate the learning activities of diverse professional groups through individual and team action projects, and blended learning programs linked to performance management plans. The aim is to create healthcare-based learning systems focused on continuous improvement *that achieve staff education and development objectives through the resolution of pressing organizational problems*. Staff members are encouraged to develop their leadership and management competencies through real-time problem solving and action based learning, backed by NewMindsets support.

#### ***Implementation Approach:***

This approach to leadership development has been used primarily in the context of individual hospitals and is being extended in network formats to include clusters of hospitals and related healthcare organizations. Here are some more details on the approach in practice:

- *Problem-driven learning*. Participants from different parts of the hospital or network participate in brief action-orientated workshops (no more than 1.5 hours duration) to focus on a topic of shared interest where concrete improvements are needed - e.g. helping team members deal with new challenges; getting leaders to "walk the talk;" helping staff members deal with ambiguity. The problems selected for the workshops are those nominated by staff members as being of pressing concern. The aim of each workshop is to share ideas that can create an understanding of the fundamental problem and generate practical outcomes that will lead to immediate performance improvement. Prior to the workshop participants are asked to spend a total of 30 minutes reviewing a problem scenario created with the NewMindsets self authoring system on the basis of a real situation that has been encountered in the hospital; reviewing a cluster of NewMindsets learning resources that have been attached to the scenario; and answering three or four scenario questions that capture their main ideas and potential problem solutions. The workshop then focuses on an exchange of ideas



and collective problem solving, with the main organizational implications of the meeting being captured and carried forward by an internal champion that has undertaken responsibility for generating organization-wide action. The process generates time-effective action learning and competence development, with practical individual and organizational outcomes. Learning is integrated with the realities of work practice and major strides are made in generating important dialogue and understanding between different stakeholder groups with positive impact on the culture at large.

- *Cascading impacts on general leadership development, coaching, mentoring and performance improvement.* The action-oriented approach illustrated in the above example has also been applied to other aspects of leadership and competency development. For example, the same scenario-based approach backed by a cluster of relevant NewMindsets resources is used for new manager orientation and as a way of helping staff deliver performance improvements following '360' or other personal appraisals. NewMindsets becomes the "learning backbone" that integrates a diverse set of formal and informal development initiatives in a way that gives senior leadership and HR staff a measure of strategic influence and control over what otherwise become fragmented and diffused learning activities. The ability to use the NewMindsets self authoring and learning cluster functions to bring focus to real-time organizational problems and issues is of huge strategic and operational significance, and equally important, seen as a direct practical aid to work improvement by the staff that participate - not as just another onerous job responsibility or "thing to do."

#### ***Achievements:***

- In addition to the strategic and operational achievements described above for the organizations involved, this use of the NewMindsets system has led to an inventory of problem-oriented scenarios based on real-life healthcare examples that are available to other organizations wishing to adopt the same approach. The aim of this sector-based NewMindsets initiative is to bring urgently needed and highly cost- and time-effective leadership development to healthcare organizations - in a way that they can learn from each other, instead of having to develop learning materials and methodologies from scratch. The materials, with minor modification to suit local circumstances, are immediately transferable.
- The use of NewMindsets as a "learning backbone" is proving a powerful tool for performance management with an emphasis on *learning and the development of staff* as opposed to just evaluation and control. Staff that need to upgrade competencies see that help is immediately available; their leaders and managers can get as involved in the process as they wish, and gain comfort with the fact that the action-orientation itself brings bottom line benefits to the learning and development process.

For further information contact [info@newmindsets.com](mailto:info@newmindsets.com)