

Executive Events

Background and purpose

There are a number of building blocks for building a successful organisation. The first two of these are: (1) A good leader and (2) A high-performing Executive Team or, to use our language, Corporate Brain. There are plenty of pitfalls along the way. It is not unknown for organisations to recruit a group of highly talented individuals to Director roles but then fail to get the individuals to work well together as a collective. Another common scenario is overdependence on one or two key individuals - the team can crash if these people leave.

It is well established that the best way to develop a high-performing team is to put people in a room together and give them something they have in common to work on. An Executive Event lifts this idea up to an organisational and strategic level.

The purpose of an Executive Event is to proactively create a high-performing Executive Team, develop the Corporate Brain of an organisation and, in doing so, remove the above risks.

Typical aims

These are to:

- Hear from the leader
- Reflect on progress and achievements
- Look to the future
- Provide an opportunity for quality thinking time
- Identify and plan for future challenges
- Do Real Work
- Develop the team
- Get to know each other better
- Create alignment and momentum

Typical contents

Typical contents include:

- **Individual Perspectives**
A high-level review consisting of a series of questions designed to get the strategic juices flowing and establish where each individual thinks they/their department/the organisation is at, both strategically and operationally. This is a unique opportunity for each individual to compare and contrast where they are in comparison to their colleagues and it is especially important for the leader to hear this.
- **Leader Speaks**
An opportunity for the leader to set out their stall, say what is on their mind and spell out their priorities for the team and organisation. To quote two of our long-standing clients:
"It's a fundamental opportunity to communicate key messages to your team in a manner that can't be done any other way".
"A Leader Speaks is your chance to set the direction, where you're coming from and what you stand for".
We will provide our best practice guidelines to help with your planning.

- Strategy review
Review current strategies (see also the Briefing Note for Strategy Development Events).
- Real Work
Typically scoping and determining a way forward for topics that are strategically important to the organisation.
- Getting to know each other better
The team learn more about each other, e.g. backgrounds, preferences. To quote a couple of recent participants:
"It's good to look beyond the role and learn about the person".
"There's a wealth of knowledge and experience in the room that we don't currently tap in to".

Format and frequency

These events are best run over 2 days at an off-site location conducive to strategic thinking. The frequency needs to be a minimum of once-a-year or, better still, 6 monthly. If there is a lot of change going on, our recommendation would be to increase the frequency as required.

Who should attend?

- (1) The Chief Executive/Managing Director
- (2) Directors, i.e. Direct Reports to the Chief Executive/Managing Director

Developing the Corporate Brain

One of the ultimate aims of an Executive Event is to develop the Corporate Brain of an organisation. The signs of an effective Corporate Brain are that it:

- (1) Takes direction from the leader
- (2) Is able to debate issues of organisational importance with balanced participation and input from each member then come to a jointly accepted, sensible and strategic conclusion
- (3) Thinks strategically and doesn't get bogged down in detail
- (4) Focuses on the customer
- (5) Is able to do Real Work quickly and efficiently, i.e. dissect something of organisational importance, identify issues, evaluate options and decide a way forward
- (6) Prefers data over anecdote and opinion
- (7) Knows how to convert good intentions into decisions and actions, and then make what has been agreed happen
- (8) Each Director participates in the running of the whole organisation, not just their department
- (9) Talks with one voice throughout the organisation
- (10) Has behaviours and meeting habits that are 'straight out of the manual'
- (11) Speaks the language of improvement, e.g. "Pareto", "Vital Few/Useful Many", "Project-by-Project", "process, not people"
- (12) No individual is perfect but there is collective compensation for each other's strengths, weaknesses and foibles
- (13) Is able to deal with changes in team composition without losing pace and performance
- (14) Directors can move between each other's roles - thus gaining experience and flexibility
- (15) Is able to take crises in its stride
- (16) The individuals in it are united by the Mission and Vision of the organisation

Running regular Executive Events will contribute to the development of all the above.

How we work with you

Stage 1 - Planning meeting

We will hold a meeting with the leader of the organisation to find out any relevant background information including organisational priorities, the status of any current strategies, how the team is doing both individually and collectively and any emerging issues - team or task related. Occasionally and only if necessary, 1-1 meetings can be held with other key individuals to find out their viewpoints.

Stage 2 - Proposal

We will prepare a proposal outlining the structure and contents of the event.

Stage 3 - Delivery

We run the event. This allows the leader to focus on listening and leading and not have to worry about the agenda, structure, levels of participation and so on.

Stage 4 - Review letter

We will send you a review letter documenting key points, our reflections, recommendations and suggested next steps.

Stage 5 - Review meeting

Finally we will hold a review meeting, discuss the contents of the review letter, find out what's happened since and see if there are any next steps.