

US Public Sector

*When a 300,000-strong US public sector organization needed to transform its business model, Hemsley Fraser developed and delivered **customized change leadership training to 9,000 managers and supervisors** to help them implement change successfully. The powerful program has had a strong, continuing impact on client employees and on everyone involved in developing and delivering the training. The opportunity to achieve similar results is now available to organizations in any sector.*

CASESTUDY: US Public Sector

Change on a grand scale

An increasingly challenging operating environment led a large US public sector organization to embark on major re-organization and modernization of the services it provides to tens of millions of customers. Demand for its services are growing both in volume and complexity, while economic, legislative and other pressures combine to produce future uncertainty. The nature of the care, benefits and support it provides to its customers is itself changing as are the channels for interacting with those customers.

A requirement for faster, more efficient, self-service delivery of administrative services, much higher demand for customer-focused direct services and a number of critical and urgent customer needs led it to completely rethink its service delivery model. At the same time, it realized that such large-scale changes would have an immediate and far-reaching impact on its employees. Its big challenges were to prepare employees, especially leaders, to understand and drive the required transformation in service delivery as changes in both their personal approach to service and in their approach to leading the organization.

To address these challenges the organization formulated a vision for the future embodied in a five-year plan with goals including improved quality and accessibility of services, increased customer satisfaction and investment in its human capital. The plan's guiding principles recognize that people are the backbone of the organization, that tangible, visible accomplishments are the most important measure of success and that to deliver the best services with available resources it must work smarter, more collaboratively, more innovatively and more effectively.

With this vision for change established, how could the organization motivate more than 300,000 employees operating from hundreds of sites across the US to implement it?



Preparing leaders for change

Attempting large-scale change is pointless if those required to implement it do not understand or support it. In partnership with consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton, Hemsley Fraser was awarded the contract to deliver strategic leadership training to develop the more than 70,000 managers and supervisors to be capable of implementing the vision.

As one of the world's top 20 leadership training companies*, Hemsley Fraser's standard methodology for training leaders and its existing directory of courses were key attractions. The initial requirement was for Hemsley Fraser to adapt standard courses for a specific audience with a focus on both personal development and the development of leadership skills.

"We developed a three-phase series providing transformation and change program skills," explains Barbra Symonds, Head of Public Sector at Hemsley Fraser. *"Each phase has eight courses covering 'preparing for change', 'managing the change' and 'sustaining the change' organized into separate 'change academies'. In addition, we created certificate program for leaders with direct responsibility for driving identified initiatives."*



A photograph of a group of people in a meeting. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair pulled back is resting her chin on her hand, looking thoughtfully towards the camera. She is wearing a light-colored, vertically striped button-down shirt. Behind her, two other people are visible but out of focus. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting.

“We continued to adapt and refine courses based on experience and on what worked and didn’t work.”

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Customized courses

From a kick-off meeting on 7 June 2010 Hemsley Fraser customized the program of courses ready to start delivery by 29 June at 36 sites to achieve the broadest reach as quickly as possible. A team of two product managers, six designers, three evaluation specialists and three executive consultants worked non-stop to tailor the courses and fully prepare a faculty of 40 instructors to meet this demanding deadline successfully.

"Our courses are designed to bring out issues and to get people to start thinking differently."

Taking its standard courses as a baseline, Hemsley Fraser designers adapted them to suit the client's required language and objectives. They also incorporated custom case studies and examples relevant to public sector organizations.

Comprehensive course content ranges from 'analyzing issues and engaging stakeholders' and 'assessing opportunities' to 'building winning teams' and 'communicating with impact'. Advance courses address 'continuous improvement', 'creative and innovative problem solving' and 'creating a culture of change and innovation'. Personal development, team management, motivation and handling conflict are all addressed in the context of change.

Varying in length from one day to two hours, all courses are interactive and encourage participants to talk about their own experiences. Delivery is face-to-face led by instructor or as an instructor-led webinar.



Overcoming obstacles to change

Change academies also offer targeted programs to large sites or self-contained organizations, reaching the top leadership as well as those with serious supervisory responsibility.

"It introduces them to the learning that their people will encounter," says Kerry Johnson, executive consultant for Hemsley Fraser, who facilitates many change academies. "It also gets them working together and thinking what they want to work on. These are working sessions focused on real change initiatives. Within them, participants apply new skills directly to real work and improve what they learn during the week. Working as action learning teams, participants return to the job with a mandate to implement and improve upon these changes over time. They are required to report back progress to executives and share results with colleagues." One group of 90 had never been together before because they had always been too busy to think about things. One participant said she got four months' work done in this week. They could apply things and see an immediate impact."

A key aspect of change academies is the flexibility of the Hemsley Fraser team. Often open discussions identify issues not previously apparent. This can be as big a surprise for the clients' leaders and can appear to threaten their plans.

"We stop and deal with that issue there and then. Everyone needs to express their concerns before we can move forward. Our courses are designed to bring out issues and to get people to start thinking differently. This kind of facilitation requires flexibility."

The effectiveness of the change academies is demonstrated by how employees have started talking to each other and working together across boundaries. One organization even won an award as result of its achievement.

Refinement and innovation

"After we started, we worked with our facilitators to guide construction of the courses," says Larry McCullough, Lead Designer for Hemsley Fraser. "We continued to adapt and refine courses based on experience and on what worked and didn't work."

This refinement by continuing development of courses in response to feedback was critical as further requirements were quickly identified. A high rate of course cancellations was experienced as employees often bowed to pressure to deal with the immediate demands of their jobs rather than focus on their development for the future. A number of self-contained internal organizations also requested custom programs to support their own change initiatives.

Hemsley Fraser responded quickly by developing the change academy concept. Change academies enable a series of courses to be run at a single venue over three to five days to suit a specific site or organization. They encourage sponsorship of training for a specific purpose so that participants can see the practical value that courses give them.



Measuring success

Some 9,000 unique individuals have so far attended 550 courses and events, with audience numbers ranging from 10 to 20 for webinars to 100 managers for week-long change academies and future plans to deliver one event to more than 2,000 employees. But numbers alone do not demonstrate success and putting on a course will not in itself lead to change.

In large organizations there can be a tendency to follow accepted practices because that is what has always happened. Considering the obstacles to change that fear and uncertainty can cause among employees, respondents' comments highlight the success that programs are having in overcoming this and creating empathy. Participant responses to Hemsley Fraser's courses and change academies are overwhelmingly favourable with people agreeing that they would recommend the training to others and that they can apply the learning in their jobs.

Powerful feedback also demonstrates the impact training has on individuals, describing the program as *"not just a lecture – like being part of conversation"* and that *"people felt comfortable enough to speak about difficult changes they were going through"*. Comments show participants valuing the practical benefits of courses: *"not only does it help with tools to deal with changes in the workplace, it also focused on the tools to use in everyday life"* and *"I loved learning the force field analysis. I plan on taking this tool back to my management team for development through the transformation plan."*

Participants' enthusiasm is also clear: *"This is much-needed information for all of us! Great Instructor!"* and even *"After 20 years in the military, and 15 working in government as a civilian, this was absolutely the most provocative and useful training I've ever had."*

Its not only client participants who are enthused. Hemsley Fraser facilitators describe the program as the most rewarding they have ever worked on because of the scale of the challenge and the effect that it has on participants: *"What a great experience this was. A real collaborative experience. And what reviews! I love this work!"*

"I loved learning the force field analysis. I plan on taking this tool back to my management team."





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Continuing development

Hemsley Fraser was initially contracted to provide training to the end of May 2011 and this has now been extended until September. Additional developments beyond the original scope are now in progress. These include Hemsley Fraser's creation of individual working assignments for a group of up to 1,000 of the client's senior executives and the establishment of a special academy to accelerate the progress of competent employees with the capability to help individuals and organizations solve problems.

As well as further work with this client, Hemsley Fraser is also building on the success of this project by exploring further collaboration with Booz Allen Hamilton.

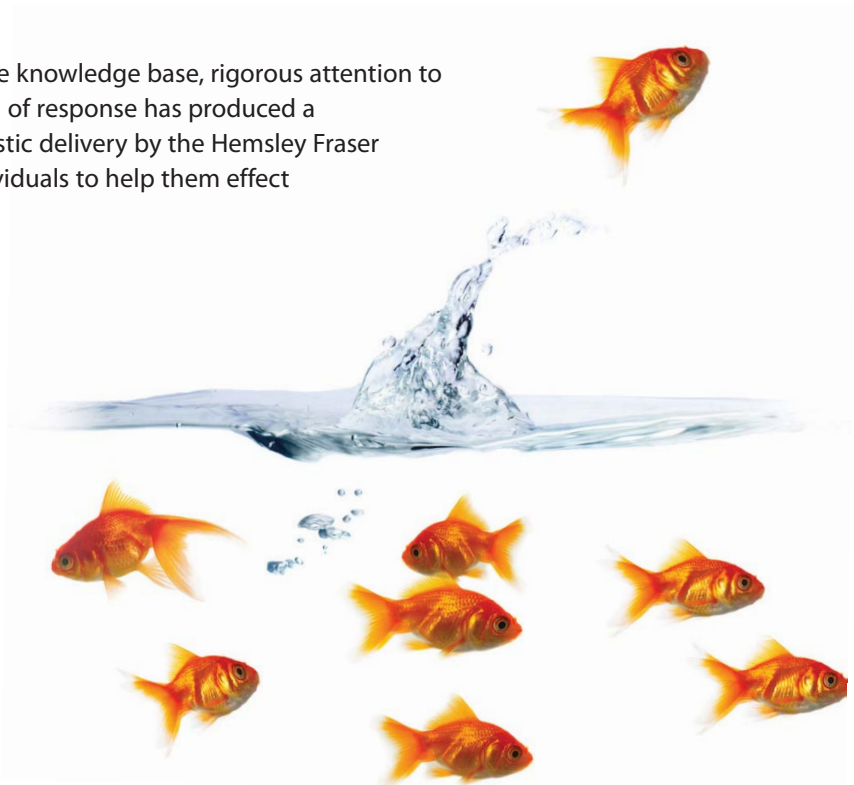


Does your organization need to change?

Meeting the challenge of designing and delivering training on such a large scale led Hemsley Fraser to refine its own processes. Tight deadlines required flexibility from its team to adapt materials as they went along in order to incorporate client needs into programs.

"We spent a lot of time developing the process and streamlining it for speed," says Larry McCullough. "We built continuous improvement processes into the way we designed the courses." The result is that in addition to producing a specific program tailored to the individual requirements of this client, Hemsley Fraser's program can be replicated for clients in other sectors who are looking to implement change. "The architecture we've developed can be easily adapted for organizations facing similar requirements. It's a very strong curriculum."

While the combination of the comprehensive knowledge base, rigorous attention to customer requirements, flexibility and speed of response has produced a powerful program, committed and enthusiastic delivery by the Hemsley Fraser team ensures it resonates strongly with individuals to help them effect real change.



CASESTUDY

When organizations face daunting changes,
Hemsley Fraser reaches out to individuals



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