



Action Learning Sets

Ever sat in your office and wondered what to do next or been uncertain about how to tackle a particularly difficult problem?

You are not alone. And, if you join a SOLACE Enterprises' learning set, you will not only see how many other people have the same concerns, but also be able to see how they tackle them and what they have learnt from their experiences. Taking part will give you the opportunity to find ways to deal with the issues and dilemmas you face in your role and to learn more about yourself as a manager and a person.

What is a learning set?

Often described as 'learning to learn by doing,' action learning sets are a powerful way of achieving personal development. A learning set is a group of between six and nine people coming together regularly to reflect critically on how and what they are doing. The learning is on real work problems, and involves taking action as well as analysing. It includes paying attention to what you feel, as well as what you think; this is so that choices for action are based on the best information available. Through exploring, challenging and learning about different perspectives, you gain insight into bigger systems in which you work. Strengthening personal relationships across organisations can make all the difference between hours of fruitless negotiations and seeing where a little effort can have a big impact.

Many top managers have been in a learning set for several years now. Since launching sets in 2000, we have organised well over 60 of them. A full (and external) evaluation of the sets was undertaken by Bath Consultancy Group in 2003, with the average satisfaction

rating being over 4 out of 5. Groups agree ground rules for working together and there are rules and techniques to ensure each individual gets the maximum benefit from the set. Normally each set meeting is one day – typically 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. However, each set is different and makes its own arrangements. As a guide, set members should expect to pay between £250 and £300 plus VAT for each meeting (depending on cost of venue, subsistence etc). Normally a set contracts for six meetings, typically meeting every two-three months.

Who is it for?

SOLACE Enterprises organises sets of many different kinds, such as

- Peers within the local government community
- Peers from across wider public service (an 'inter-agency' set)
- Peers who work together in a locality e.g. via a Local Strategic Partnership or Area Public Service Agreement
- Chief Executive-only sets
- Sets for Corporate/Strategic/ Executive/Policy Directors
- Women-only sets
- People working on a common theme, eg Every Child Matters, or Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- Managers from black and minority ethnic groups.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre. You can either phone on 0845 601 0649 or email resource.centre@solaceenterprises.com To find out more about SOLACE Enterprises and our full range of consultancy services see

www.solaceenterprises.com

