

It's amazing what you can achieve when you have the whole organisation behind you

About Bromford

Bromford is a social business, helping people to be the very best that they can be. With over 1200 colleagues at multiple regional locations and over 50 years of housing heritage, they provide high-quality homes for rent and sale, and offer specialist housing support, training and employment services.

The Challenge

Their aim is to truly enhance performance and service to their customers; they have already made good progress to becoming a learning organisation through a culture of inspiring people to be their best by trying new ways of doing things. This is helped in no small way by a really supportive Executive team, and a really strong set of organisational values, the "Be Bromford" expectations. These are a golden thread through which all development relates back to organisational strategy.

Their challenge is to fully implement a 70 20 10 approach and underpin this with agile technology. This is to progress beyond their existing systems and deliver technology that enhances the process in a flexible and responsive way, with the ability to change "at the speed of business".

The Starting Point

Culturally they are at a great place! They have an inclusive and open culture, where sharing and learning is valued and supported from the board level to the front line. They are prolific social media users, utilising multiple channels and have embraced video as a communication tool. This has been really helped by having a combined Organisational Development and Communications Director, who has enthusiasm in abundance and really knows what she is doing.

Who is involved?

The Leadership Team – who set the tone and context of conversations and lead by example; living the Bromford Expectations. They have started with the end in mind, i.e. by defining what needs to be tracked and reported on, to demonstrate impact. The key measure is around capability. How "job ready" is our organisation at a point in time?

Capable colleagues are ultimately recognised as what delivers service to their customers and results to the business.

The Technology Partner (TWM) – by understanding Bromford's vision, and as a 70 20 10 organisation. TWM are a great partner to work with, their adaptable approach with the ability to share vision, plus the confidence and experience to challenge Bromford's thinking means a productive working relationship.

Colleague Development (L&D) – who are creating a shift from directed to self-directed learning, but also from generic to personalised development, act as the curators of the four expectations and facilitate people supporting each other. Critical, is empowering Line Managers to take responsibility for their team, and guiding them in the right direction. It was recognised that if Colleague Development weren't part of the conversation, specifically within the "70", (the workplace experience), they just wouldn't be relevant.

Managers – are critical in the process. There is already a strong culture of one to one conversations, with a core focus on changing behaviours in a positive way. The system gives them the tools to do this efficiently and focus on the conversation, not the process.

Users – With targeted learning that is easy to access and relevant for their specific roles, users are able to take advantage of the opportunity to interact with their colleagues to share and self-develop. The aim is to foster engaged and empowered colleagues (users) who take responsibility and deliver against the expectations. This needs personalised learning, but recognising this is against a framework that is designed to meet organisational expectations.

How are we doing it?

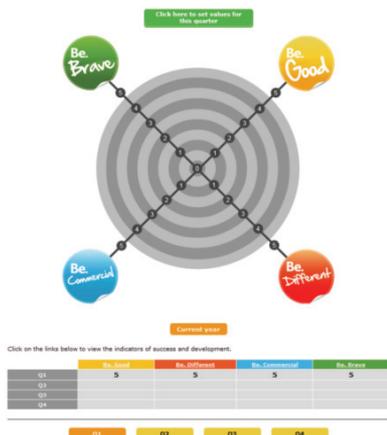
Working with TWM, Bromford has deployed an integrated tool that puts the user at its heart. This combines performance and development activities and with collaboration tools that link formal and informal learning.

The first step is a self-assessment against the expectations, shifts in which are tracked through time. This starts the conversation with their Line Manager and the performance process. In monthly conversations evidence is collected and development guided by the manager, all focused on achieving SMART objectives. The system shares conversations between the manager and the colleague, and ultimately provides a continually collated and evaluated repository of evidence that links to the annual appraisal process, or in Bromford terms "Looking Back, Looking Forward".

From a formal perspective, every individual has a "Getting Job Ready" pathway related to their role. This is set up by Colleague Development and automatically served to them through login recognition. This outlines the activities and learning they need to undertake to perform in the role. This personalised and targeted learning combines a variety of common and specific elements, including where necessary, a link to a course-booking system to enable users to take some ownership and control of their formal learning.

From a Manager's perspective, they are given an extra set of tools to allow them to see their team's activity, encouraging continual support for performance and development. This also links to a succession tool to report on risks and opportunities within their team profile. This helps them interact with other functions such as HR and Colleague Development, putting them at the centre of the talent process and thereby keeping it focused on day to day performance.

At an organisational level, expectations are referenced and reported against, throughout all activities and there is a suite of reporting to provide in-depth organisational intelligence. At any point in time, this provides



Colleague Development with a voice when responding to and advising on strategy.

Key to it all, is not only looking at business and the outcomes required, but also technology and any limitations or opportunities this represents. With a new IT Director at Bromford, there is an interesting debate opening up around "Bring your own device".

What does the strategy include?

Although early days, there are already plans by Colleague Development to enhance the offer further by really promoting the opportunity for interaction between colleagues and therefore, truly demonstrate and support the application of learning in the workplace. Key is the ability to collaborate and share. Interesting applications using gamification, are proposed to ensure the all-important validation that reinforces engagement. Of course, there is also a growing body of excellent content to enhance the learning experience, including video, that is both user and organisationally generated and third-party content integrated into coherent learning plans.

Ultimately the aspiration is to open this up to a wider audience and allow a fully networked learning experience where all stakeholders, including customers, are feeding back into the individual's development process, and with the progress made so far, this is a real possibility in the medium term.

Impact

Having undertaken a relatively soft launch in the first month, where the Colleague Development team visited individual teams to promote the approach, the take up has been excellent. In the first month 41% logged in and 64% in the second; and anecdotal feedback has been excellent. Clearly, it is too soon to understand real organisational impact. These are very quantitative measures, but it's early days. The qualitative information will come with time.

Summary

At the core, implementing a 70 20 10 approach is about process, application and technology. It is important to work with a technology partner that know more than just about the technology element. TWM understand Bromford, where they are coming from, where they want to get to and most importantly, why they are trying to get there. TWM are both challenging and supporting Bromford on a continuous journey towards being a true 70 20 10 organisation, with an emphasis on taking the first steps:

Step One – Integrate what you have and focus on the user experience. Personalise the learning process and allow users to take responsibility for their own learning. Work to ensure the technology enhances your existing processes to engage the manager and give them what they need to manage performance and support development of their people.

Step Two – Collaborate: putting the tools in place to enable people to share views, experiences and results, from one, to many, to all, to all! At the same time ensure L&D remain a legitimate part of the conversation and help guide this in the right direction to deliver organisational performance outcomes.