

the company

Scottish Water is the largest provider of water and wastewater services in Scotland, employing over 4000 people and providing 5 million customers with these essential services.

business unit councils

The role of Business Unit Councils with Scottish Water is to manage business functions in conjunction with the local management teams. The Councils discuss all issues affecting employees who work in their area of business and resolve problems / make decisions by consensus. In doing so, they also have a responsibility to promote the principles and values of the partnership - a crucial function, given the arrival of the EU Information & Consultation Directive.

the role of workbase scotland

Workbase Scotland has delivered a diverse range of employee development at Scottish Water for the past 5 years. In 2003, Workbase Scotland won a tender to implement the second phase of a three year development programme which aims to improve the overall performance of the Business Unit Councils. As Graeme Ferguson, Partnership Facilitator, says;

'Workbase Scotland was asked to tender for the project because of their previous experience and knowledge of partnership working, specifically with Trade Union representatives. This phase was in two parts - the first part addressed skills learning and development needs and the second part involved project based assignments putting into practice the skills acquired.'

The development aimed to improve the individual and collective performance of the councils and their members. It has addressed issues such as chair meeting, communication, leadership, business awareness and problem solving. The knowledge gained in the first phase was utilised in the second phase of the project - implementing the ideas and skills learnt in workshops to enhance the company performance.

positive results

So far, Business Unit Council performance and individual performance has significantly improved and feedback from participants confirms this. According to Graeme;

'Individual Business Unit Council members have greater confidence in themselves, enhanced understanding of their role and contribution they are able to make, improved business awareness, and a greater willingness to contribute, participate and challenge at meetings.'


'Since the development by Workbase Scotland, Councils are more business-like in how they conduct their meetings, e.g. better led, more effective chairing, more open discussion, more transparency about agendas. Now there is input from everyone rather than it just being management led. There has certainly been a marked improvement in the way business is conducted and decisions made.'




Graeme Ferguson
Partnership Facilitator
Scottish Water

next steps

If you would like to talk to a consultant from Workbase Scotland about 'The Communication and Partnership Programme', please contact us at:

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