



Excellence in Employee Engagement:

Sunshine Escapes

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EXAMPLE

## Organisation Details

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	Sunshine Escapes
<b>Legal status – private, public, not for profit, etc</b>	Private
<b>Number of employees plus full-time, part-time breakdown</b>	250
<b>Main Address</b>	Sunshine Escapes 53 New Broad Street London
<b>Contact Person</b>	Fred McCoy
<b>Telephone Number</b>	123 456 7890
<b>E-mail Address</b>	fred@sunshineescapes.co.uk
<b>What does your organisation do?</b>	Sunshine Escapes provides adventures holidays across Europe.
<b>Who are your main customer groups?</b>	Our tours require guests to have a moderate level of fitness and our main customer groups are single travellers and small groups aged between 18-35 years old.
<b>What are the main products and services you offer?</b>	Our main product is short primarily weekend breaks to areas of natural beauty in Europe where you can take part in adventure sports.
<b>Please list any previous awards earned by the project/initiative submitted for this award</b>	Employee Engagement Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsung Hero Award 2017</li> <li>• Wellbeing Award 2018</li> </ul>

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## Description of your Entry

**Title of your project/initiative** **Sunshine Smiles**

**SUMMARY (200 words maximum)** Please provide a high level outline of your project/initiative. What aspects of it do you consider demonstrate excellence?

Faced with a competitive operating environment we needed to become more efficient. After consulting staff we realised that the main driver of inefficiency in the business was different departments working in silos, not communicating or sharing information effectively. We therefore began a project to bring people from across the organisation closer together. We wanted our employees to build relationship with people from different departments to increase their understanding of one another's roles and improve communication across the business. To achieve this we started a cross-department working group which implemented a number of initiatives to tear down our silos. These included Trading Tuesday and end-to-end process mapping videos.

### **SECTION A - Rationale for the Project (500 words maximum)**

**This should cover:**

- **The aim of the project, initiative and approach.**
- **Why it is important to your organisation.**
- **What measures and targets you have in place which will demonstrate its success.**

The aim of the project was to improve employee engagement by removing the silos in Sunshine Escapes working patterns. It was hoped that this would improve the efficiency, by reducing errors and time wasted from waiting for the information to complete tasks. We also wanted to make Sunshine Escapes a more enjoyable place to work by creating more togetherness across the organisation.

This project was and remains important to our business because we are operating in a very competitive market. We needed to be able to be competitive on price while protecting our margins therefore reducing cost through improved efficiency is always priority. Furthermore 'Caring' is one of our corporate values meaning that Sunshine Escapes will look after its employees and that our employees look after one another. It is therefore important for us to create an environment in which employees feel supported and can ask anyone for help not just someone in their team or department.

Overall this project is aimed at improving the performance of the business therefore we have linked it to our profit. However we have also identified some more people specific measures to give a coherent view of the impact of the project. In our annual staff survey we ask our employees: "How effective is co-operation between departments?" of our 2015 employee survey, respondents; 71% of employees said that co-operation across departments was ineffective. When the responses were analysed further non-managerial staff made up the majority of these responses. This could be explained by the fact that there are very few forums for non-managers to discuss issues with one another and that these roles are impacted the most by disjointed working between departments. We aimed to improve this result so that more than 50% of employees rated co-operation between departments as

effective or highly effective.

Our staff survey contains other perception measures which we also aimed to improve as a result of this project, but we believe the 'co-operation' measure is the most important. We also sought to analyse the qualitative responses which we receive to our annual self-assessment to monitor improvement. In our Balance Scorecard we record rates of sickness and absence as well as head count and turn over. The senior management team review the Balance Scorecard monthly so therefore the impact of this project on these measures will also be reviewed.

To monitor the progress of the project we recorded the completion of tasks with timescales and budget as well as the attendance of the working group meetings to monitor whether all departments were still engaged with the process. There was buy-in from the senior management team for this project so staff were to be given time to participate.

### **SECTION B - Planning the Project (500 words maximum)**

**This should cover:**

- **How the project was planned and why it was done that way.**
- **What you believe demonstrates excellence about the planning**
- **How were relevant stakeholders involved at the planning stage?**

Traditionally we have used a specific project management function to manage projects. This time we created a cross-department working group made up of a non-managerial representative from each department. This was because this group had the worst perception of co-operation between departments therefore it was important for them to be engaged with the solution. By creating a group with a representative from each department we aimed to include the whole organisation.

This group was asked to review the response to the self-assessment and the staff survey which highlighted the problems with silos and communication. They grouped the concerns into themes and brainstormed solutions. Once the group had decided on a number of initiatives to implement the feedback to each of the departments. However instead of each person talking to their own department we got them to join the team meeting of different department in order to begin the process of removing the siloes and increasing communication between department. While there was some hesitation the feedback from this initial consultation was positive.

Using the RADAR methodology from the EFQM Excellence Model we created a project plan which included a timeline for the actions to be introduced. The working group communicated this plan at their department and team meetings. We also made the project plan available on Sunshine Escapes intranet and social network.

## SECTION C - Implementing the Project (500 words maximum)

This should cover:

- What you believe demonstrates excellence about how the project was implemented
- How were relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation stage.
- How were your resources managed?

Over a nine month period the members of the working group spearheaded the implementation of a variety of initiatives. These included:

### **Trading Tuesday:**

This was our spin on hot-desking where once a week one person from each department had to sit with a different department on Tuesdays. The working group created a rota to organise the participation in Trading Tuesday. Participating employees used our internal social media to share what they got up to on their day with another department and what they learnt from the team. This was a completely new approach for our organisation because we do not use hot-desking normally.

### **End to End Process Mapping Videos:**

We created videos which gave a high-level overview of our business critical processes. In detail they then explained what happens at the interfaces between departments. We have used videos for advertising purposes and for messages from the Chief Executive but we have never used them for the process mapping purposes so this was an innovative approach for us.

### **Technology Updates:**

One of the themes which came out of the self-assessment was that staff are not aware when changes to our IT which affect their job are going to take place. As a company we have been going through an IT transformation which has more effectively integrated our sales, marketing and website therefore there have been many changes which employees have had to adapt to. The technology team had been sending out updates but many people found them difficult to understand. We have introduced a company-wide call which includes a Q&A and now the marketing team are working closer with the technology team to sense check their updates.

### **Quarterly Company-wide Socials:**

Sunshine Escapes has always encouraged employees to have fun and plan social events however these budgets have been held at a department level. Having been suggested by the working group the senior management agreed to hold some of that money at a company-wide level so that more events could be organised which the whole organisation can participate in. Since making this change we have held three events all of which have been attended by more than 100 employees.

The above were all part of the formal project plan however a number of other actions have been taken by employees as a result of the project. For example when staff started to make the process mapping video they also started to discuss how the processes could be improved. As a result a number of our key processes are now being reviewed.

**SECTION D - Impact and Learning (500 words maximum)**

**This should cover:**

- **What were the outcomes/results of the project which demonstrate excellence**
- **What did the organisation learn from the project (this could include from the planning and/or the implementation)**
- **What do you perceive to be the long term impact?**

This project has had a profound impact on our business. Participation in the project has been excellent with representatives from all departments attending meetings and implementing actions in their areas. The results from the 2016 Staff Survey showed that we had met our target. A full set of our results can be found in the additional evidence which we have submitted. Furthermore our profit has increased by 5% during the period of this project.

Through this project Sunshine Escapes and its employees have learnt a lot. Firstly the non-managerial employees who formed the working group have gained new project management skills. However in hindsight we would have given these employees project management training sooner because the project made some participants feel out of their depth in the beginning. Secondly our managers have learnt to keep listening to our employees all year round. As an organisation that uses annual staff surveys and self-assessment we perceived ourselves to be an organisation that effectively engaged our employees and responded to their ideas. The number of ideas and quality of the suggestions brought to light through this project however challenged this perception within the senior management team. We are now looking to improve how we listen to and implement new ideas across the business.

We are confident that this project will have a long term positive impact on the business. On a practical level we have changed our Balance Scorecard to include the staff survey metric on co-operation which we believe reflects the importance of co-operation to the performance of our business. The members of the project team have built strong relationships with one another which will improve their satisfaction with the job. Generally we believe that all of our employees have improved job satisfaction because they experience less frustration. This project has also given employees a renewed confidence that Sunshine Escapes will listen to their concerns and suggestions because it has shown clearly the company acting on staff feedback. Furthermore many of the initiatives which have been implemented are low cost and therefore it will be possible for these to be continued into the future.