

# National Health Service (UK): Leadership development for staff from the ethnic minorities

**By Neslyn Watson-Druée**

*(As told to TMS Development International Ltd)*

This case study shows how two of the Team Management Systems (TMS) Profiles and the QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> (Opportunities / Obstacles Quotient) Profile have been used as part of a personal and career development program within the National Health Service (NHS).

## The problem

Ethnic minority staff, particularly those from Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities, have historically not advanced as far up the management structure of the NHS as other staff.

A program was required which: -

- Recognized the needs of staff from the ethnic minorities
- Improved their chances of responding successfully to opportunities for promotion

Working with predominantly white mentors, the program aimed to: -

- Promote equal opportunities for all staff within the NHS
- Support leadership, personal and professional development
- Enable staff to have a clearer understanding of how to prevent organizational excellence from becoming blocked
- Develop strategic plans and activities to overcome any barriers faced

## The solution

Neslyn Watson-Druée, Executive Director of Beacon Organisational Development Ltd, set up a ten-month program, entitled 'Leadership, Career, and Personal Development', for use within NHS health authorities. So far, the program has been run in the South West, the West Midlands, and West Yorkshire.

Each program involves a mixed-ability group made up of between 12 and 23 participants, inclusive of consultants, senior managers, deputy directors, middle and junior managers. The aim is to build the skills, competencies and political understanding needed to support innovation within the NHS, and thus improve the delivery of the services it offers. Neslyn explains:

*"The idea behind the program is not to improve clinical or administrative competencies – that's why there can be such a broad mix of people and specializations on the course. What I want to convey to the whole group is that they can all exercise leadership within the NHS."*

## Mentoring

As part of the program, all participants have two mentors from within their organization. One mentor is a senior manager from their organization, and another from board level. The process is designed to provide support to participants, and develop work-based learning and action learning by giving them access to resources and networks.

Those within the scheme are encouraged to meet up a week before and a week after each workshop. Discussion with course participants centers around how they are putting the theory into practice and how their personal development can be carried forward. Not only do the mentees produce 'reflective practice' reports, but the mentors also have to give specific examples of how they are using this mentoring experience to break down barriers within their organization.

## Diagnostic tools

Each participant is given three diagnostic questionnaires to fill in during the first workshop. The Team Management Profile Questionnaire looks at their work preferences, the QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> Questionnaire looks at their approach to risk and the Types of Work Profile Questionnaire looks at the criteria for their current job. Types of Work Profile Questionnaires are also sent to each attendee's manager, and to one of their peers, so that these different views can also be examined during the program.

Neslyn comments:

*"The profiles which result from these questionnaires are revisited again and again during the program to work on many different areas. The material which they cover has a huge impact on all their work."*

## The ten modules

Neslyn's program lasts ten months, with a two-day workshop taking place each month. Participants are given assignments to carry out between each section of the program.

At each workshop, Neslyn explores a particular aspect of the NHS and the personal skills or responsibilities within it. The following is a summary from Neslyn of each module:

### 1. Understanding the purpose of the NHS

*"The introductory session sets out the broad strategic direction of the NHS. This forms the background for the next nine months of workshops."*

### 2. Understanding your contribution to the NHS

*"Following on from the first session, we focus on each participant's vision for the development of the NHS, within the context of their own responsibilities and goals."*

*We start by using the Types of Work Profile to compare the views of each job holder with those of the two others who also completed the questionnaire: their manager, and one of their peers. This also helps everyone to understand Margerison and McCann's Types of Work, as they relate them immediately to the work which they are personally undertaking.*

*In order for people to perform their function within such a large organization, they need more than just authority or expertise or resources, and so we move at this point from discussing the job itself to talking about how people can exercise leadership within it.*

*We use the Team Management Profile to help people to understand their own potential by looking at where they are along the four work preference measures.*

*Once they understand their overall approach, we can then work with it and focus on different sections of the profile over the rest of the program, to help them maximize their leadership within the NHS.*

*As part of the aim of this program is to encourage innovation, I ask people not just to consider what their role is within the NHS, but also what they can do differently to enhance innovation in their role. The QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> is ideal for this, as it is so good at challenging the traditional mindset, by giving people an insight into the opportunities, as well as the constraints, which they face. We look at the overall QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> score when we introduce the profile, and then we focus on the section on 'Fault-Finding'. By using this information, people can weigh up risks or deal with problems with greater objectivity. The information on 'Handling Change' is also very important, as it can help participants approach future developments within the NHS with confidence."*

**Figure 1. QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> Model**



### **3. Developing your networking profile**

*"By this stage, I want people to think about moving forward within the NHS.*

*This session returns to the Team Management Profile, to look at a key factor - how people relate to each other. One way in which I get people to understand different approaches is by pairing them off into 'buddies'. Quite often, these are people with different roles on the Team Management Wheel."*

One former participant on the course, Pam Samuel, who works at the Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust, had a particularly strong relationship with her 'buddy'. Pam takes up the story:

*"I'm a Creator-Innovator and I was paired with a Concluder-Producer, right on the opposite side of the Wheel. We realized that our roles complemented each other: she pulls me down to earth when I'm being too creative and not concentrating enough on the practical, everyday reality, and I can encourage her if there is something troubling her, by getting her to look more at the 'big picture'.*

*One example really sums up the importance of our partnership. I had put together a presentation to explain some work I was doing, and I was very proud of the work. When my 'buddy' came to hear me speak, she was very annoyed that I had made some typing errors on a couple of the slides that I used.*

*To me, this was not all-important - the ideas were the significant thing, not the detail of how they were presented. She showed me that some people place far more importance on these aspects, and that, for them, any errors devalue the ideas. To her, my work should not have been finished until everything was double-checked: she said 'You've created all these ideas, but are you going to finish them off? Are you going to cross the Ts?'"*

#### **4. Creating and sustaining high-performing teams**

*"Having worked on the idea of personal balance, I now extend the theme to look at the big picture of how teams operate. The Team Management Wheel provides a model for communication and for balance within teams, and so we look at this before we return to the Team Management Profile to look at each individual's own role and their contribution to their team."*

*We also revisit the Types of Work Profile and focus on the 'job match' score during this workshop, to ask how each individual's preferences reflect the job they perform within their team."*

#### **5. Moving towards advancement within the NHS**

*"At this stage, we move from the participants' current jobs to the jobs they want to hold in the future. We look at the next step for each one, and we give them the real job description and the person specification for the position which they want."*

*We then compare the skills which participants have gained from their current jobs with those they will need to develop. Again, we go back to the 'job match', to help them recognize the opportunities for development which they already have, and to see if there are other aspects which they will need to work on in order to 'bridge the gap' between current and future roles."*

*During this component of the program, each person is given a mock interview for their chosen job. As well as the technical questions in the interview, we also ask them how their skills and competencies match the post. This gives them the chance to sell themselves, using the understanding of themselves they've gained through the Team Management Profile, and the understanding of their job from the Types of Work Profile. People who've really taken their preferences on board will sell themselves more effectively."*

*We give them a great deal of feedback and criticism: the idea is that hopefully, when they go for a real interview for this job, they'll be better placed to be appointed because they'll understand how to use their negotiation and self-presentation skills more effectively."*

#### **6. Managing your performance**

*"This session looks at the principles of performance management, especially in terms of the benchmarking process which is used to measure progress towards NHS objectives."*

*We look again at the criteria for each new role in terms of the 'types of work'. If a particular area requires attention to detail, for example, it's important that people learn to bring out their Controller-Inspector skills."*

*The other important factor you need to manage your performance is motivation. Two aspects of the QO<sub>2</sub><sup>TM</sup> help to focus on this area: the section on 'Moving Towards Goals', which looks specifically at how you encourage yourself to achieve your aims. The feedback on 'Multi-Pathways', which we also look at here, helps people to generate new ways to overcome obstacles in order to reach their goals."*

*As a final element of this workshop, participants carry out a self-appraisal, and are also given an appraisal by their peers, so that a benchmark is set up against which they can see future improvements in their performance."*

#### **7. Strategic planning**

*"This workshop sets out the background of how strategic planning works within the NHS."*

*We return to the Team Management Profile during this session, to look at how people can use their preferences to operate within these frameworks – it may be the case that they need to stretch themselves outside their preferences to work more successfully."*

The QO<sub>2</sub><sup>™</sup> can also be very helpful, as it draws attention to individuals' reactions to obstacles. We use the 'Multi-Pathways' section to enable people to consider their conformity to the status quo and to assist them to generate new ways to reach their goals if they need to. The information on 'Time Focus' shows people whether they prefer to look back to the security of the past, or to be more forward-looking. This is crucial too, as their approach will have a huge impact on how they plan for the future."

## **8. Decision-making**

"Further frameworks are introduced at this session, around making effective decisions. I give participants models which they can use to help themselves make sure that all factors which might affect a decision are covered. These include the SWOT model (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), and the PESTE framework, which concentrates on potential threats from five areas: Political, Economical, Social, Technical and Environmental.

After looking at the theory, we focus on the decision-making section of the Team Management Profile, to introduce participants to the different approaches of analytical and beliefs-based decision-making."

## **9. Influencing and negotiation**

"In the penultimate workshop, we look at how people can use their influencing and negotiation skills to press for win-win situations.

As part of this, we focus on what makes communication effective, and especially how to ensure good managerial communication. We also look at how conflict arises, and techniques for resolving it.

This session uses information from the QO<sub>2</sub><sup>™</sup> to help people improve their 'Multi-Pathway' skills. These are the crucial resource for successful negotiation, as they allow people to 'think on their feet', when answering questions or making their case.

We also focus on the contrasts between different preferences in the Team Management Profile, so that people learn how to alter their approach to match the people they are communicating with – whether they give them a great deal of detail or just the 'big picture', and how they communicate – in an introverted or a more extroverted way, for example."

## **10. Work-based counseling**

"The final workshop is designed to ensure that the learning from the course is taken further.

We go back to the appraisals from the sixth workshop, to look at what's already working well for people, and what's working less well, so that these areas can be addressed. Lastly, we look at how to avoid future difficulties, and if there are any patterns which should not be repeated."

## **Personal development**

180 people have now completed the program, and numerous course participants have gained career advancement as a result of the skills they acquired from the program. Examples of jobs now held by previous participants include: -

- Director of Nursing, NHS Professionals
- Assistant Director, Equality and Diversity
- Lead Nurse, NHS Careers
- Recruitment and Retention Lead, NHS West Midlands
- Clinical Governance Manager, Commission for Health Improvement
- Deputy Directors of Nursing, NHS
- Managers, NHS Direct

## **Organizational development**

As well as the personal benefits, which have been brought about by the course, the NHS itself has benefited from the changes to attitudes within it, both around management issues and around innovation.

One example of this can be seen with Pam Samuel, a former nurse from Trinidad, whose strong relationship with her 'buddy' inspired her to introduce a similar intracultural support scheme to Bradford Hospitals Trust, where she is Assistant Director: Equalities and Diversity.

Pam says that Bradford is already ahead of the field in recruiting and retaining staff from ethnic minority communities. Although she has never had any experience at work of racism, she says:

*"Through my current role, I know racism exists and although a great deal of good work is evident, nationally there is a lot still to be done."*

Pam's scheme pairs up new staff with colleagues from the same ethnic minority background to provide support and encouragement in their new environment. Because these mentors are perceived as more approachable than senior managers, they can help to address any problems at an early stage. Pam adds:

*"By introducing this I was sticking my neck out a bit but sometimes you have to in order to make a difference. And I was supported right from the top of the organization."*

*Nevertheless, it was Neslyn's program that gave me the knowledge and the understanding I needed. These were the skills which enabled me to persuade key stakeholders that this initiative would benefit not only individuals, but the whole organization."*

As a result of the scheme being introduced, Pam was included in the Independent on Sunday Top 10 Nurses for 2001, and won the Nurse of the Year Award for Leadership. This was the third year running in which the Leadership award had been won by former participants of Neslyn's program.

## **Team Management Systems**

Neslyn is very proud of the way that the 'Leadership, Career, and Personal Development' program uses the profiles to their full potential.

*"I can see that lots of organizations will use TMS as a one-off for something like teambuilding or negotiation."*

*We are lucky, because our leadership development program takes place over ten modules, and so we can look at the applications of all three instruments, and really deepen people's understanding of how people can use their preferences flexibly to stretch and improve their performance."*

*You can put conflict down to a number of different causes, but when you understand the range and flexibility of preferences, you can say 'Ah! This is because we have different decision-making mechanisms, and isn't that interesting' - TMS allows you to turn these situations into opportunities."*

## **The success of the program**

Neslyn has been supported by the UK Secretary of State for Health, Alan Milburn, who launched the program for the West Midlands in 1999. During the NHS Confederation 2001 Conference, he cited the program as a demonstration of good practice within the NHS. The program has also generated a great deal of media interest, and former participants have been featured on BBC Radio and Television.

The program's participants are not the only ones to enjoy greater success as a result of the program. Neslyn Watson-Dru e received an MBE for services in the development of Nursing Leadership in 1999. She has won many other awards, including a Windrush Achievement Award as a Special Honours Pioneer in 1999, and a Millennium Special Recognition Award for outstanding contribution to nursing.



*Neslyn's investiture*

Neslyn was the inaugural Chairman of the Royal College of Nursing's Race and Equality Committee. She has held roles as Non-Executive Director of South West London Community NHS Trust, and with the former Lambeth Healthcare Trust. She is a former Director of Mosaic Clubhouse which rehabilitates people with mental health episodes, and also held a Secretary of State Appointment to United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

On 1 April 2001, Neslyn became the chairman of Kingston Primary Care Trust. Neslyn is also currently a Director of Getting London Working (SRB Project for the long-term unemployed).

Neslyn has recently received the highest award given by the Royal College of Nursing to its members: she became a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the nursing profession.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Neslyn Watson-Druée, MBE, FRCN**

**1 Rowlls Road, Kingston,  
Surrey KT1 3ET, United Kingdom**

**Tel: +44-(0)20-85490595**

[info@beaconconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@beaconconsulting.co.uk)

Neslyn Watson-Druée, MBE is Managing Director of Beacon Organisational Development. Beacon Organisational Development concerns itself with development of people and organizations in areas of leadership, performance improvement, team development, influencing, equal opportunities, diversity personal and career development. Founded in 1989, this established and reputable company provides consulting services and offers solutions in the areas of the company's expertise.

Strategically located in Surrey UK, the company employs the skills and services of a number of diverse professions who orchestrate all facets of daily operations.

Neslyn has worked directly with NHS Trusts around the UK to deliver leadership, career development and diversity training and she chaired a review of ethnic sensitivity of South West NHS Region's services, looking at equality and equality of access for patients as well as opportunities for staff.