

Welkin Health Invests in Leaders to Fuel It's Social Mission

Sounding Board coaches helped new managers grow into effective leaders and established an enduring leadership culture.



Welkin Health was founded in 2013 to address the lack of software health organizations could use to deliver patient-centered care. It became their mission and led to the development of its patient relationship management software.

The solution soon catapulted the company in the marketplace. Its team doubled in size, and newly promoted managers lacked experience and struggled to adequately support their teams. In addition, the results of the company's first engagement and inclusion survey found that just 66% of employees rated Welkin's management favorably. This prompted Olivia Williams, Welkin's director of people, to reach out to Sounding Board to help them establish an enduring leadership culture—a set of collective values that inform leadership attitudes and choices across an organization.

The Strategy

Welkin partnered with Sounding Board to improve engagement and to offer one-on-one support to its new leaders. Sounding Board would help managers build three core skills:

1. Communicating a consistent, unified vision.
2. Delivering performance-enhancing feedback to direct reports.
3. Fostering inclusion, diversity, and well-being at the team level.

"A big part of my role here is curating the culture. That means making sure we're living up to our values of diversity and inclusion and fostering employee engagement. We send out company-wide engagement surveys twice a year. The first time we did this, there were modest but clear signs that our management team needed support as they grew into their new roles. That's what prompted me to look into leadership coaching."

- Olivia Williams, Director of People at Welkin

I could see at a glance where people were in their engagement, and what skills they were tackling with their coaches. The matching technology also made things so simple; there was never a mismatch in terms of coachees.

Olivia Williams, Director of People



The Solution

Sounding Board's used its proprietary 1:1 matching technology to expertly match leaders with their ideal coach—a person who could relate to the coachee and challenge them to approach issues from new perspectives.

Coaches first worked with coachees to master core leadership competencies—skills such as communication, delegation, feedback, performance improvement, and more. Next, they helped leaders consider how best to embody the company's values of inclusion, diversity, and well-being, a process that eventually led to the development of a formal list of leadership values, separate from those of the broader company, to support its leadership culture in the years to come.

The Sounding Board platform gave Olivia and the rest of her team complete visibility into the progress and engagement of coachees. These metrics tracked their progress and documented the value of coaching while keeping individual coaching discussions private. This functionality enabled Olivia to demonstrate the ROI of coaching early to get sustained buy-in and to scale the program.

The Results

Welkin saw radical improvement in the company's Q4 2018 Engagement & Inclusion survey across the board:

- » 83% of Welkin employees rated management favorably.
- » 91% of employees now believed their managers genuinely cared about their well-being.
- » 86% of employees said their manager kept them well informed of high-level strategy.
- » 72% of employees said their manager provided useful feedback on their performance.
- » 81% of employees said their managers of employees said their manager is a great role model.

Coachees' self-ratings also improved radically over the initial six-month period. On average, they felt over 70% better at communicating their vision and giving direction. They also rated themselves 50% more capable of inspiring and motivating their team, their self-awareness and authenticity ratings improved by 60%, and their ratings for empathy, trust, and interpersonal skills improved by 77%.