Communication Through Change – Part 1

Presented by Natalie Green, Creative Advisor, Communications and Engagement Team at Avivo, and Kate Fulton, General Manager People and Culture at Avivo.

# Introduction

This video is part 1 of a series of 4.

Avivo made the decision to move to self-managing teams in the context of the rollout of the NDIS, and as a way of recognising the citizenship of their employees.

In this series of four videos, Nat and Kate explain what the change involved, how they engaged their workforce to take ownership of the change, and lessons learned along the way.

# Natalie:

I’m Natalie and I'm part of the Comms and Engagement team at Avivo.

# Kate:

I'm Kate and I'm part of the Exec team at Avivo.

Avivo is a support organisation that's based in Western Australia. We support just over 3000 people across Western Australia and they’re people who have a disability, people who require psychosocial support or people who are older or frailing.

We have around 1,200 colleagues. The majority of those colleagues are out working in the community, working with people in people's homes. So we have about 800-900 people who are out in the community and then the rest of us are based in various office roles and part of the kind of infrastructure around Avivo.

For the last 8-10 years Avivo's been really focused on affecting the citizenship of the people that we support and when we talk about the term citizenship what we’re talking about is the areas that we need to pay attention to for people to have a good life. So people having their own home, people being connected to the community, people having freedom to make the decisions and direct the support and their lives in a way that make sense to them, so it's kind of all of the elements that make up a good life.

So we have been really, really focused on how do we do that how would we do that well. And I’d say probably over the last two to three years we’ve changed some of our focus or expanded our focus to look at what does the notion of citizenship mean in a kind of work context and for our colleagues.

So we did quite a bit of work asking our colleagues what does it take what are the conditions that help you be your best self at work. And low and behold, what people told us were exactly they kind of mirrored the keys to citizenship. So they were the things like what helps me be my best self is to have freedom at work, to have autonomy at work, to be clear about my purpose, to be contributing to something bigger, to have terms and conditions that mean that I can act as a citizen in community life and probably one of the really big things we heard it was a sense of connection to each other and to the organisation.

So I think probably about three years we really start to look at if citizenship is what's important to Avivo then that means that the citizenship of everybody. So we started to change our focus to look at what will it take for Avivo to be an organisation that really advances everybody’s citizenship, including our colleagues.

So that was kind of the starting point I think for this particular transformation. And I think we discovered self-management as a potential operating model - for want a better word - or potential way to increase people's freedom and autonomy. But definitely the end game for us is there to we’re in a situation where our colleagues are saying “I do feel free, I do feel autonomous, I do feel connected” and self-management is one of the ways that we're looking as making that happen.

So I kinda over all the last couple of years probably is that’s the journey we’ve been on, trying to turn the organisation into a network of a self-managed teams. We've been calling the project “Working Locally” so that's the kind of tagline, that's the brand, and Nat will tell you a bit about the brand and how we communicated all of that.

Given that where we're heading is to increase freedom and autonomy, what we knew was this journey how to evolve everybody and it was about people.

# Nat:

So because you weren't working with a top-down mandate about “you will change” because, as Kate said, that's completely goes against the idea of citizenship where you know people have a choice and they have some autonomy and involvement.

It was important to us that the initial strategic direction included a big group of people to pull together how this might look and we called that initial part “the Roadmap”. So we had a guide and a framework for how we might move the entire project along and then it became you know how we would let people know where we were up to, what had been going on and you know difficult with such a big distributed workforce, the majority of whom are in community-based roles in the field.

So the Comms and Engagement plan was about involvement - how can we best keep people informed and involved as often as we can with as many different types of opportunities and as many channels, as many layers, as we could build to that as possible to help tell the story.

Communication is the idea that it's a one-way information sharing so it might be a collated fact sheet that is sent out. It’s not something that can have a return. Whereas the engagement allows for two-way involvement. So we really wanted to work on both to make sure that there was opportunities for engagement: workshops, events, speakers, team meetings, those types of things where people could come together and be heard you know rather than just being told.

# National Disability Services

NDS is the peak body for more than a thousand non-government disability service providers, and is the only organisation that represents the full spectrum of disability service providers across Australia.

NDS believes that the information contained in this video is correct at time of publishing, however NDS reserves the right to vary any of this video without further notice. The information provided in this video should not be relied on instead of legal, medical, financial or professional advice.

End of document.