

## **Commissioning Consultancy Training Evaluation**

There were eight attendees in the morning and seven in the afternoon. Not all attendees responded to every question. Question 11 was worded 'I would/would not recommend this course to colleagues or partners (please delete as applicable) because...' and each participant stated that they would recommend the course.

### **1. What I found most useful today was:**

- Networking and briefing exercise, because identified overlapping interest with other agency and crystallised thoughts.
- The opportunity to think about how to commission, in greater detail.
- The whole session was useful, because it was well-constructed, logical and experiential.
- Workshop sessions – designing and responding to a brief, because good chance to see both sides of the coin – eye-opener in terms of how vague briefs can be (including those you write yourself!).
- Developing a brief exercise, because it emphasised the need for clear briefing on the part of the commissioner.
- Practical process of putting a brief together, because time to think through the process.
- The content throughout the day was very practical, because it is relevant to our jobs. The exercise and discussion on status was particularly interesting.
- Insight into writing the brief, because demonstrates potential to mislead and confuse.

### **2. What I found least useful today was:**

- Course delivery, because good level of interaction but at times waxing lyrical and not punchy enough – e.g. concise! Perhaps real case studies linking back to learning points required?
- I found the whole course extremely useful.
- The afternoon session could have been shorter, because it was a bit repetitive – could have been condensed (but a minor quibble!).
- Nothing.
- The trouble-shooting part of the programme, because it seemed less relevant, the emphasis needs to be for the commissioner to get the brief correct.
- Recruitment process, because interesting but not so applicable to my organisation.
- Cannot think of anything to state here.
- All aspects were of benefit.

### **3. What I learned today, that I will take forward into my work, is:**

- Communicating requirements to providers is essential to effective outcomes.

- To be meticulous about what I am commissioning and why. That communication can be extremely complex.
- That I know more than I thought about commissioning – will be more confident in this aspect of my work in future.
- Being much clearer in terms of outcomes, objectives, tasks, etc when preparing briefs for consultants.
- The exercise on the place of status was valuable.
- Planning the process better.
- The process of recruiting and working with a consultant in a clearly agreed framework that each understands.
- Need for clarity and good communication.

**4. What I will do differently in my work, as a result of this course, is:**

- Ensure regular communication takes place and that SLAs are more robust in terms of specification and compliance with monitoring information.
- To think carefully about how I put my message across and to be aware of how perceived status can affect communication and ultimately delivery.
- Be able to work on improving my skills on writing a brief. Will be able to share the learning with colleagues.
- Take more time to think through what we want from consultants we commission. Also how we work with them on a day to day basis managing the brief.
- Consider commissioning research as a facet of planning process.
- As above, hopefully.
- More systematic in working with consultants.
- Improve clarity of briefs – monitor progress more effectively.

**5. The exercise that was most effective for me was:**

- Briefing, because crystallised thoughts around importance of concise and clear communication.
- The writing of the brief, because it surprised me how a throwaway remark inserted into the spec was focussed on and changed the context of the project.
- Writing and responding to the brief, because it highlighted best practice and gave insight into the way that consultants do business.
- Status exercise, because we all know the role that status etc plays in our daily interactions, but the exercise reinforced the concept – good for the afternoon session!
- Writing a brief, because as described about the need to be very clear as a commissioner about what you want.
- Reviewing the three briefs, because useful to see how phrasing etc can be misinterpreted.
- Re status, because I can apply it to my own team to generate their thoughts and ideas.
- Writing the brief, because we got aspects of it wrong. Confused the consultants. Always learn best from own errors.

**6. The exercise that was least effective for me was:**

- All exercises were useful because all linked very well.
- Pairs exercise, because I didn't feel that me and my partner communicated very well.
- The trouble-shooting bit, because felt we had covered most of the elements already.
- None.
- I liked all the exercises.
- Each exercise had value.
- Role play around status, because initially misunderstood the role play.

**7. Using a scale from 1 (terrible) to 10 (excellent), I would give the trainers a score of:**

- 6, because useful insights but sometimes disjointed – lack of clear links at times between commentary and group discussion.
- 10, because they come across as dedicated and knowledgeable but also open to criticism. They did not pretend to know everything.
- 10, because they were informative, responsive, obviously know their business – made the whole session interesting and stimulating.
- 10! Because clear, concise, to the point, knew what they were on about, good/extensive experience to draw upon, light-hearted, credible, etc.
- 7, because the information was communicated well.
- 9, because I believe you should have something to strive for!
- 10, because both were very down to earth and clear and held attention throughout the day.
- 8, because generally clear and common sense approach.

[average: 8.75]

**8. Using a scale from 1 (terrible) to 10 (excellent), I would give the venue a score of:**

- 8, because comfortable, accessible and good amenities.
- 10, because food was good and place was nice with adequate parking facilities – also easy to find.
- 10, because pleasant room, good lunch, easy to get to, etc.
- 10, because pleasant, quiet, good facilities, lovely buildings, courtyard etc.
- 7, because it was comfortable and suitable for the course.
- 9, because good venue, easy to get to, lunch was good.
- 10, because good, parking, catering.
- 8, because good quality, suited requirements.

[average: 9]

**9. I think the course could have been improved by:**

- Setting out objectives written down and agreed by participants and trainer(s). Drawing on theory, concepts – too anecdotal whilst insights were useful.
- Don't think I could comment on how to improve.
- I can't think of anything that would improve it, but will let you know if I think of anything!
- Giving out packs for participants – a few handouts to focus attention, etc.
- Being clearer that it's a course for commissioning consultants rather than "commissioning services".
- Difficult to add to the content without extending the time.
- Although we have been provided with a book, a few brief handouts detailing the key areas would be useful.
- Provision of course materials – unless it is all covered in the book?

**10. Overall I would describe the course as:**

- Good opportunity for multi-agency networking and improving process for commissioning consultants and to some extent generally.
- Extremely useful; interesting and gave me time out to think.
- Excellent. Very useful and appropriate to my role.
- Very useful for those commissioning – not just consultants. Makes you think much harder about what you are trying to achieve than you would sat at your desk at work.
- Well organised.
- Constructive and quite practice-focused – this is always helpful.
- Practical and applicable to the work environment.
- Common sense and useful.

**11. I would recommend this course to colleagues or partners, because:**

- It was helpful to iron out pitfalls with commissioning.
- I think it would contribute to an improved way of working.
- It gives an insight into the consultants' world, gives examples of good commissioning practice which will be useful for any type of commissioning.
- We spend/are tempted to spend a lot of money on consultancy support – need to ensure we get value for money. Helps you to think of consultants as partners and not just the hired help.
- It would provide good guidance to the principles of commissioning.
- It focuses on effective processes and encourages participants to question often accepted practice.
- Often people are expected to prepare briefs and work with consultants without enough prior experience or training.
- As above – practical benefit.

**12. Any other comments:**

- Useful elements, good group discussion and opportunity for networking. Enjoyed exercises.
- Very interesting day – thoroughly enjoyed it.

- Thanks for the opportunity and the book. The numbers worked well – may not be cost-effective to run for 7-8 people but gave plenty of opportunities for everyone to contribute.
- Biscuits and cakes very welcome!
- Great tattoo!