

# Executive Events

## Background and purpose

The top two building blocks for a successful organisation are: (1) A good leader and (2) A high-performing Executive Team or, to use UIMPROVE language, Corporate Brain. It is well established that the best way to develop a high-performing team is to put people in a room together and give them something they have in common to work on. An Executive Event lifts this idea up to an organisational and strategic level. The focus, pitch and content of Executive Events are about leading the whole organisation, and not just about the team itself.

The high-level purposes of an Executive Event are to:

- (1) Proactively create a high-performing Executive Team and develop the Corporate Brain of the organisation
- (2) Work together on topics of organisational importance
- (3) Set the direction for and improve the organisation

## Typical aims

These are to:

- Hear from the leader
- Reflect on progress and achievements
- Look to the future
- Provide an opportunity for quality thinking time
- Identify and plan for future challenges
- Do Real Work together
- Develop the team
- Get to know each other better
- Learn together
- Create alignment and momentum - "if we are not aligned, no-one is aligned" (a client)

## Who should attend?

- (1) The Chief Executive/Managing Director
- (2) Directors, i.e. Direct Reports to the Chief Executive/Managing Director

## Format and frequency

These events are best run over 2 days at an off-site location conducive to strategic thinking. The ideal frequency is 6 monthly.

Executive Events are one, and perhaps the most important, component of a systematic approach to organisational improvement. Better to do these than nothing at all, but rapid and sustainable results happen if these events are part of an holistic approach and form the backbone of an annual calendar that includes training and other team-based activities.

## Typical contents

- **Individual Perspectives**  
A high-level review consisting of a series of questions designed to get the strategic juices flowing and establish where each individual thinks they/their department/the organisation is at, both strategically and operationally. Individual Perspectives provides a unique opportunity for each individual to compare and contrast where they are in relation to their colleagues and it is especially important for the leader to hear and reflect upon this.
- **Leader Speaks**  
An opportunity for the leader to set out their stall, say what is on their mind and spell out their priorities for the team and organisation. To quote two of our long-standing clients: "It's a fundamental opportunity to communicate key messages to your team in a manner that can't be done any other way".  
"A Leader Speaks is your chance to set the direction, where you're coming from and what you stand for".  
We will provide our Leader Speaks Guidelines to help with your planning.
- **Strategy development/implementation/review work**  
(see also the Briefing Note for Strategy Development Events).
- **Real Work**  
Scoping, identifying options and determining a way forward for topics that are strategically important to the organisation.
- **Organisational maintenance - the top three topics are outlined below**
- **Getting to know each other better**  
The team learn more about each other, e.g. experience, backgrounds, preferences.

## Organisational maintenance - the top three topics

- **Succession planning**  
This can be wide-ranging or focused on a particular area or tier as required. Structurally this typically includes identifying who could step-up or move across into each role so that there is always a 'plan B'. Person-by-person reviews are also appropriate to identify rising talent and who might be ready for a change or new responsibilities.
- **Organisational design review**  
Instead of regularly reviewing, tweaking and refining organisational design, many organisations wait until the whole thing is creaking and then carry out a big reorganisation - which can cause stress and frequently misses many smaller opportunities. Regular review at Executive Events, which can be in detail or light touch, means the organisational design is always fit for purpose.
- **Next Tier Down review**  
How the Executive Team as a collective interacts and works with the Next Tier Down of senior managers as a collective is tricky to get right - but can yield major benefits for relatively little effort. We have a number of sessions including a teach-in that will improve this aspect of the organisation.