



CCVS

Support for community & voluntary groups

Case study

Taylor Vinters & Illuminate - a shared approach to better mental health

BACKGROUND



Taylor Vinters are an international law firm that supports a range of clients, from Fortune 500 technology multinationals, fast growth venture-backed businesses

and owner managed businesses. The firm has 28 partners and 80 lawyers across offices in London, Cambridge and Singapore. According to the firm's entry in Sunday Times top 100 best companies, at least 20% of Taylor Vinters staff are known to undertake charitable activities during business hours.

www.taylorvinters.com



Illuminate are a small registered charity that specialises in mental health coaching and facilitation to help people make positive changes. The charity operates across Cambridgeshire with adults who are unemployed or working limited hours with mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar and much more. They also provide a range of services to

businesses that support and strengthen the resilience and output of leaders and staff.

www.illuminatecharity.org.uk

TAYLOR VINTERS' APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

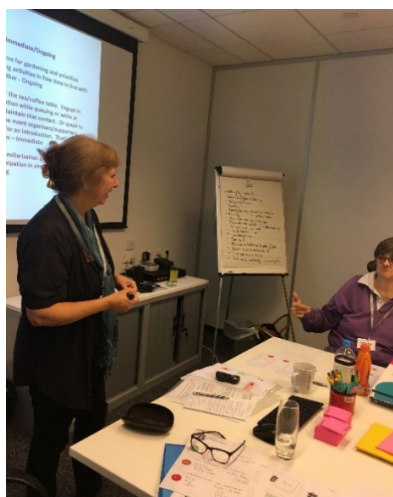
Jan Holmes, Learning & Development Manager at Taylor Vinters, explains that the firm's ethos is to work collaboratively involving everyone in their network or 'tribe' including employees, suppliers, clients and investors. If a member of the tribe is passionate about a cause and they can engage others, they can apply for support to the firm's CSR panel, which includes people from across the business.

Key to Taylor Vinters' commitment to community support are:

- The improvements that volunteering brings to people's well-being. This is part of a commitment to champion good mental health within the business that addresses how people are treated, expectations and work/life balance.
- It increases its attractiveness as an employer particular to younger people who are passionate about the environment and giving back to the community- as Jan puts it 'they have made us up our game.'
- It enhances team-working, taking people out of their normal areas of work and removing hierarchies.

HOW THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ILLUMINATE EVOLVED

Taylor Vinters became involved with Illuminate after the charity met a Taylor Vinters employee at an event who put them in touch with Jan. At the time, Illuminate asked for guidance on adapting their confidence for change programme for use in businesses. This had clear synergy with the work Jan does on wellbeing so she could see how they could help. Out of the discussions, Taylor Vinters went on to collaborate with Illuminate on a mental health event for Illuminate beneficiaries focussed on helping people prepare to re-enter the workplace. Taylor Vinters hosted the event, Jan and her manager gave talks and some of Taylor Vinters' suppliers helped with CV's.



Jan Holmes at the event hosted for Illuminate beneficiaries

One of the outcomes of the event was that Taylor Vinters and Illuminate worked together to develop a mentoring programme where eight mentors from across the Taylor Vinters network were carefully partnered with eight beneficiaries over six weeks.

Illuminate were able to secure an Awards for All lottery grant to fund the setting up and management of the project from their end. The Taylor Vinters mentors supported the Illuminate beneficiaries to help them gain the confidence and skills they needed to get back into the workplace. It was not all plain sailing, for some of the Taylor Vinters volunteers; mentoring was a new skill and they were anxious about working with people with mental illness. Likewise, the Illuminate mentees found preparing to return to work very challenging because of the very difficult experiences many had in the past and the mentors had to help them address their fears.

Illuminate tracked the beneficiaries and fed back the results of the project to Taylor Vinters. In the main, the results were very gratifying for all involved with measurable improvements in confidence and well-being for mentees, including some going on to achieve their goal of re-entering the workplace. In return, Taylor Vinters mentors gained a valuable education in how to tackle the stigma of mental health in the workplace, supporting the firm's commitment to the Mindful Business Charter⁵.

Richard Stephens, an Illuminate graduate successfully worked alongside his mentor to become an associate trainer and speaker for Illuminate. He has gone on to be invited by Taylor Vinters Cambridge to deliver his presentation on Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace.

"Richard's talk was insightful and from the heart." Jan Holmes, Taylor Vinters

KEY LEARNING POINTS

The project was successful because Taylor Vinters and Illuminate worked in partnership and created an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship with a shared goal. They were able to foster a common interest in improving the understanding and experience of people who face mental health challenges in the workplace and work together to create a real difference.

⁵ The intention of the Mindful Business Charter is to remove unnecessary sources of workplace stress and promote better mental health and wellbeing in the legal community. <https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/who-we-are/Mindful%20Business%20Charter%202018.pdf>