

Merkle: Disability confident managers

Merkle, a global marketing agency, approached Leonard Cheshire's Training and Consultancy team to discuss how we could best support their UK managers to become 'disability confident'.

Merkle had already established an active staff network, their Disability Pillar, which had completed some fantastic work to develop understanding of disability within the organisation. The Pillar had also been developing an Adjustment Passport, a live record of adjustments agreed between a manager and an employee. However, alongside these positive developments, Merkle recognised there were gaps in managers' confidence, including how to manage disabled staff, understanding non-visible disability, using disability-related language and discussing making adjustments.

“Throughout the whole experience Leonard Cheshire were on and to help support us in achieving our aim of improving disability confidence within our managers. I look forward to continuing our relationship with Leonard Cheshire in the years to come.”

Holly Jinks

Disability Pillar Lead
Merkle

After identifying what Merkle wanted to achieve, we proposed training support to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of their managers. This included removing barriers for disabled employees and working inclusively with their teams. We designed a workshop which we delivered to 25 managers across two days in February 2020.

Our training

Our interactive Disability Confident Managers workshops focused on understanding a best practice approach to disability – ensuring that managers could apply this to the management of their teams, both in the office and on client sites.

We began the sessions by discussing the groups' understanding and perceptions of disability and disability-related language. We then supported managers to understand how to spot signs an employee may be facing barriers, holding good conversations with staff and removing barriers by making adjustments. We also informed managers of best practice during the recruitment process and at interviews, and how managers can effectively use Adjustment Passports to support employees.

Throughout the sessions we used bespoke case studies, designed by

Leonard Cheshire, based on the lived experience of disabled employees at Merkle. This helped the managers to apply the learning to their own working environments, and consider changes they could make to their management practices to work more inclusively.

We received positive feedback from Merkle – managers commented that they found the workshops thought-provoking, engaging and actionable. They also told us that they felt more confident speaking about disability in the workplace and better equipped to support and communicate with their teams.

"I am confident I will now be much more aware of disability in the workplace, and how to identify if someone is facing a barrier."

Next steps

Merkle's managers identified a number of take-aways from the sessions, including encouraging an open dialogue with their teams and

proactively looking for barriers their employees may be facing.

Members of Merkle's training team also found the sessions informative and considered changes which could be made to support inclusive internal training.

Following the session, Merkle's Disability Pillar have now successfully launched their Adjustment Passport – using the lessons and messaging from the training sessions. Merkle have also been discussing how to build this inclusive messaging into their wider management training and are considering more disability-specific content within their training modules.

Over the next year, Leonard Cheshire will continue to work with Merkle to build upon the learning achieved in these sessions, track the impact of the training and provide further guidance and support for managers.

About Training and Consultancy from Leonard Cheshire

We will work closely with your organisation to better understand you, your people and your priorities. After identifying the needs of your organisation, we will provide you with a bespoke solution to create lasting organisational change. We equip you with the knowledge, skills and confidence you need to remove barriers for groups and individuals.

To find out more:

Visit: leonardcheshire.org/get-support/working/information-employers

Email: training@leonardcheshire.org

Call: 020 3242 0200

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