

the **HRDIRECTOR**

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the **HRDIRECTOR INTERVIEW:**

**Jan Woods – Chief Personnel Officer,
PepsiCo UK & Ireland**

STRATEGIC HR

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The Royal Parks

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Pictured: Jan Woods -
Chief Personnel Officer,
PepsiCo UK & Ireland

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**DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE WHERE WE LOOK AT: FORUM – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE;
ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE; PAYROLL; THE CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER ACT ...AND MORE**



WHEN MARK CAMLEY WAS APPOINTED CEO OF ROYAL PARKS IN 2005, HE UNDERTOOK THE MAJOR CHALLENGE TO CHANGE THE CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION FUNDAMENTALLY IN ORDER TO ALIGN IT WITH A NEW STRATEGIC 'CUSTOMER' FOCUS AND IMPROVE ITS BOTTOM LINE. THIS WAS NO SMALL TASK FOR AN ENTERPRISE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR 5,000 ACRES AND 45 MILLION VISITORS ANNUALLY – AS WELL AS 1,000 DEER AND FOUR PELICANS.

"The prevailing culture was inwardly focused, to protect the assets we manage. It was about preserving the landscape and heritage, which Royal Parks did well. But this did not match the full range of activities and the commitments to stakeholders," says Mark Camley.



"The organisation was reacting to events, such as media criticism around the closure of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. We were often on the back-foot, governed by the seasons rather than a business plan. A new culture of decisive planning and implementation was required - a more proactive and extrovert approach based upon information gathered from the outside world, not just horticultural issues."

With support from partnership specialists Socia, Camley put into place a change programme in 2006 that in just eight months translated into an increase in income from £7.5 million to a projected £12 million; successful hosting of Live 8 and the London stage of the Tour de France; and winning Green Flag Awards for all eight parks in the national scheme that recognises the best parks in the country.

"The culture moved as we intended, and the extent was measured by Socia's assessments and our staff surveys. An example of the more decisive, outward focus was the handling of the foot and mouth outbreak. In 2001 we closed Richmond Park immediately in response: this time, in 2007, we managed the risk with bio-security measures, including disinfected matting and asking the public to keep dogs on leads. Some visitors complained but it kept the Park open. It worked," says Camley.

Fundamental to this success, he says, was the ability to measure changes in culture using Socia's new OPI, Organisational Partnering Indicator. Employing the type terminology of the MBTI,

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, OPI is a tool to assess the character of an organisation; identify the typical partnering style, partnership contribution and likely blind spots; and indicate how other groups may experience working with its personnel.

"a range of stakeholders' interests to accommodate and balance"

"Partnering is critical to the parks' success. There are a range of stakeholders' interests to accommodate and balance – not just local and national politicians, but also the needs of dog-walkers, recreational footballers and other park users, which generates some real passion. Also, most of the work of our 100 staff is delivered through contractors and concessionaires: a key issue is how to deliver when you do not have a direct line of management involvement," continues Mark.

The OPI tool enables organisations to predict and address the challenges when different types of organisations and their members have to work together.

Socia's experience in cultural transformation demonstrated that a critical mass of trained personnel was required to embed change swiftly, and it was agreed that initially one third of the parks' staff, the most senior managers, would be included in the first phase of the programme.

The OPI was used for a baseline measurement in October 2006, followed by two days training in collaborative leadership to enable managers to understand the implications of the results and the requirements for effective implementation, of the required changes.

Secondary training then included a one-day course for the more junior managers and staff. There were also short courses in negotiation and project management for event managers, landscapers and other personnel, to help them deal with supplier contracts and to manage delivery effectively.

Breakfast meetings with local MPs, Ward councillors, contractors and concessionaires, neighbours to the parks, as well as 'friends' provided an understanding of their needs and perspectives and also explained the plans of The Royal Parks.

The second OPI measurement, in 2007, confirmed that The Royal Parks had moved significantly to a more operational orientation, with the collaborative leadership capability ready to meet the challenge of hosting seven events at the 2012 Olympics. The organisation is also now attracting Civil Service 'fast streamers' for the first time.

Mark concludes: *"Measurement with OPI gives you a compass bearing, and proof of progress for even the most sceptical. We are drawing up a programme for the next two years, to further improve the OPI rating in relation to leadership and customer focus in particular."*

For further information:



THE ROYAL PARKS

www.royalparks.gov.uk



www.socia.co.uk