

strategy journeys

how I have helped organisations
develop effective strategic plans
and realise strategic opportunities



To go boldly...

- realising the opportunities of the new NHS

It takes a lot of effort - and care - to change established thinking, especially in successful organisations. Fundamental changes had begun in the NHS that would have a radical impact on how healthcare was delivered: this leading specialist hospital needed to work out how to respond and to seize the initiative to realise new opportunities.

The context

In 2006 the NHS was on the threshold of arguably the most fundamental period of change in its history which could transform how healthcare is delivered in this country, redesigning patient pathways to treat patients within 18 weeks of visiting a GP, with a choice of healthcare provider. Hospitals and new other providers will be competing to help us in a climate which encourages innovation to improve patient care and reduce overall healthcare costs.

Yet for those working in the NHS the current reality appeared very different, with fears about financial deficits and consequent job losses, a barrage of targets and initiatives, more organisational changes, the introduction of competition, and the new system of Payment by Results, all adding pressure on management teams and staff that were already striving to deliver the best care for their patients.

The challenge

Papworth Hospital is one of the UK's leading cardiothoracic specialist hospitals. As an NHS Foundation Trust, it has greater freedom to take responsibility for how it develops, and the opportunity to innovate and develop new approaches to healthcare and healthcare services. The Trust wanted to take the initiative and set a course for its future development in the 'new' NHS.

How I helped

- A first step was to make sense of all the changes underway in the NHS, and to crystallise the fundamental drivers and their implications. The organisation then needed to redefine its role in the new NHS, and to learn how to think and behave in different ways consistent with this – even when other organisations were continuing to act in traditional ways. This 'strategy journey' required time for people to develop this understanding, individually and collectively.
- One strategic initiative provided the opportunity to see what the new thinking meant in practice, setting an example and showing how it could be done. This required Papworth to be bold and invest in state of the art cardiac diagnostic imaging facilities, streamline the patient pathway, and market this improved and more cost-effective patient care to commissioners outside its traditional geographic referral areas. I worked with the project team to develop the thinking and prepare the business case for this major investment, including a thorough financial risk assessment.
- In a fast changing and emerging new NHS environment, the strategic planning process needed to set the directions for how the organisation should develop over the next few years, and provide a platform for action and further innovation. The resulting document explained this thinking clearly and acted as a springboard to spur the Trust's continuing development.

The outcome

The Board approved the major investment in the cardiac diagnostic initiative, and new leading edge facilities were available within a few months. The strategic plan was well received by the Board and the Governors, and the organisation is focused on driving forward along these strategic directions - with the understanding and flexibility to adapt as the new NHS evolves.

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