



Case Study | Student Loans Company | Gallagher

## Bringing About People-Focused Organisational Change

The Student Loans Company (SLC) had undergone significant organisational changes within a short period of time. These changes, whilst necessary, were sometimes implemented in such a way that existing teams were disengaged or demotivated. The SLC therefore approached Bloom's extensive marketplace of specialist professional services, with a view of rapidly contracting a provider to administer the changes in a much more people-focussed way – maximising staff engagement and responsiveness.

### The Challenge

Organisational changes at the SLC have entailed the introduction of an entirely new operating model, systems and processes. In addition, the body had taken on a new CEO, new managers and entirely new teams. This involved a fresh focus on lean job roles and revamped career pathways. These changes, which ultimately represented a far-reaching overhaul of the organisation, were sometimes met with frustration and disengagement from existing employees. Consequently, a significant number made the decision to leave the SLC.

Losing highly skilled and experienced staff, at such a critical time for the organisation, placed further pressure on the SLC's teams. As a key decision-maker explained, 'people were not with us on our journey and no matter how good or positive the change is, it doesn't work unless we bring people with us'.

The need to implement organisational changes in a people-centric way served as the backdrop of both Bloom and Gallagher's relationship with the SLC.

### Our solution

Bloom uniquely delivers the NEPRO<sup>3</sup> framework, allowing us to rapidly source appropriate suppliers for our customers. Our managed approach to procurement also minimises internal resource requirements for the customer. It addresses each aspect of the procurement process, rapidly identifying suitable suppliers in a compliant manner. This allowed us to address the SLC's precise needs whilst meeting its tight timeframes.

Utilising a dedicated and personalised customer engagement plan, Bloom was able to identify the key requirements and project specifications of the SLC. Bloom's extensive marketplace of approved suppliers allowed us to quickly determine the best fits for their requirements. We then sourced approved suppliers via mini competition, in accordance with the project specification. Gallagher, an expert culture change consultancy, was ultimately selected to deliver the projects.

Gallagher's approach to complex and emotive business challenges is always to peel back the layers and to fully immerse themselves within a business' structure and ethos. A 'deep dive' cultural and performance-based diagnostic, across all levels and roles, gave them the license and credibility to operate. Furthermore, it also gave them a thorough cultural read of where the SLC were at the time (and at what level), their operational state, people's perceived challenges, what they felt would make a difference and the capability skill gaps of frontline team leaders and colleagues.

Overall, Gallagher worked with 25 senior leaders and contributors within the SLC, working to understand specific processes and capturing their individual narratives. This allowed them to consider the rationale of the proposed changes, what their aims were and what they'd 'feel' like for individual members of the SLC's teams. They then produced a broader narrative, explaining the organisation's long-term objectives, that could capture the imaginations of the entire team. This was extensively tested and validated, undergoing no fewer than 25 separate iterations in order to ensure its quality and relevance.

Gallagher then visited various SLC sites, recording videos of team leaders and decision-makers explaining their roles and perspectives concerning the organisational changes – with a particular emphasis on what they could deliver for the team as a whole. This also taught decision-makers various techniques of effectively and accessibly explaining organisational changes, in a way that motivated and inspired their respective teams.

Initial and long-term feedback to this approach proved to be both inspiring and motivational for the SLC's colleagues. This was evidenced by a rapid reduction in people leaving the organisation. By providing full clarity and a compelling narrative concerning the SLC's journey, Gallagher was able to consolidate all organisational changes into a combined strategy 'Building Better Together', simplifying the complex.

Aligning leaders behind this message and enabling decision-makers to become specialised communicators ensured that the strategy was presented honestly, personally and in a contextualised way for each part of the business. Following this was a targeted number of virtual workshops to support leaders as the SLC entered its peak period. Frontline colleagues also received a short workshop to align to the wider strategy. Many more workshops are also planned to emphasise continual improvement.

## The Outcome

The outcomes of both Bloom's and Gallagher's strategies were as varied as they were far-reaching. Bloom's rapid and highly personalised selection process ensured that the SLC had access to the right partner and at the right time. Our managed approach to the procurement process also meant that SLC decision-makers could focus on their core priorities and at a particularly critical time.

Gallagher's cultural transformation approach also supported the realisation of rapid benefits. On average, 4.34 out of 5 colleagues who provided feedback indicated that they enjoyed the approach and found their content to be highly relevant to their own circumstances. Some 95% of leaders also indicated that they have implemented at least some of Gallagher's proposed changes, too. Finally, and although there will be a multitude of factors at play, during the period of activity the operations directorate saw both the voluntary turnover and time lost to sickness averages decrease by an impressive 20%, representing an overall saving of £700,000.

Bloom remains committed to providing the public sector with innovative procurement solutions that centre social value. We continue to champion SMEs, delivering both savings and value for money for the public sector.

