

Improved processes at British Lung Foundation

Results & ROI

- A reduction in process steps from 33 to 22, a 36% decrease
- A 53% reduction in processing time

The client

The British Lung Foundation conducts many activities in the fight against lung disease. This includes research, campaigns & support and information for those with lung disease. All of this activity requires tangible printed matter such as reports, leaflets, advertisements, posters and banners. An in-house team who produce directly also commission suppliers for some work. The team also contribute to major projects involving brand and 'tone' of voice'.

The challenge

The key areas for concern in the process, which involves internal teams requesting work, were:

- A high level of variation in understanding and expectations of the team
- Inefficiency due to very short deadlines and inadequate briefings
- Lack of collaboration with changing ideas and deadlines
- Inadequate proof-checking
- Rigidity in terms of what the final product should look like

Work had doubled over the year and was only expected to increase. The key objectives were therefore to simplify and streamline the process to give a better output more cost-effectively.

The approach

Working with the team to diagnose the situation, we found:

- The business Plan did not give enough detail for each piece of work, along with a 255% increase in demand arising from the plan
- Requests came from many sources, and were batched to be considered on one day each week
- Work was recorded when received but not then tracked
- Deadlines were only ever estimates
- An ad hoc briefing process

- Lack of clarity regarding budgets, causing confusion over invoices
- No library of previous work for reference
- No evaluation of whether the work delivered its purpose
- Tension between the team with expertise and the internal customer knowing the audience
- Less than 1% right-first-time

The team, using Lean techniques to eliminate or reduce problems, then redesigned the process. An action plan to deliver the changes and an Information Centre to monitor progress was set up.

The benefits

In addition to improved efficiency (and therefore cost savings) in the process, a number of other benefits were achieved. The process is now proportionate to the work needed, with one step for standardised briefing, including firm deadlines. A library of tangibles has been set up to reduce duplication and different versions. Demand is now managed through one channel, as it comes in to even flow of work. Lastly, work is matched to the Business Plan and has in-built evaluation.

“When your Dad teaches you to drive, you don't always listen. Then you get a driving instructor who is the expert, and you listen.”

Michael Laffan, Team Leader