



EXECUTIVE ARTS

## CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMAP

### MAKING SPACE FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

In an organisation experiencing significant financial pressures, the Accounts Payable department was facing a very difficult future. The company had announced its intention to outsource the function. The incumbent team were given six months to get their processes in shape and complete a “knowledge transfer” to hand over the processes to a third party provider - after which point only a handful of the core team’s jobs would continue to exist.

People were upset, angry and worried about their professional and personal futures. Tensions were beginning to rise in a previously happy, friendly and productive team. When the team’s managers tried to help resolve these tensions their efforts had the opposite effect. They were seen as the bad guys – responsible for making the unpopular decision to outsource and ultimately responsible for creating all the problems in the first place. The managers were finding it increasingly difficult to speak to their team. The temptation was to keep their heads down, focus on just “doing the work”, and reach their deadlines one way or another.

One of the managers had been trained in TransforMAP and realised that the whole team were struggling with their worst fears about the coming changes, and that these concerns needed to be expressed rather than ignored. In order to make space for these conversations, and

also to reintroduce the spirit of teamwork, friendship and cooperation that had previously been such a strength, he scheduled a breakfast meeting for the whole team once a week. The company provided the coffee and doughnuts and he simply used the sessions to listen to what people were worried about and what support they needed.

At first people were suspicious and reluctant to attend. But gradually they recognised the manager’s concern for them was genuine and he really did want to help them cope with the challenges they all faced. The mood began to shift. Over the following months they all looked out for each other, took pride in doing a great job in the face of these difficult circumstances and also made space to prepare for life beyond their current roles.

When the time came to hand over the work, the transition was successful and the whole team went out to celebrate a job well done. Today, many of them think of each other as great friends rather than just former colleagues.

The manager’s knowledge of TransforMAP enabled him to recognise the need for people to express themselves in order to get through the change. It had also given him a simple framework through which to interpret anything that came up – giving him the courage to start the conversation over breakfast.

**EXECUTIVE ARTS** works with licensed practitioners who are trained in our family of maps. If you would like to make use of these maps please contact us at [www.executivearts.co.uk](http://www.executivearts.co.uk)