

Supporting change agents

So, Kerry, Open Stage was a community programme that offered lots of ways to participate and shared a great deal of artistic decision-making with the public.

But to work that really needed the support of all your staff.

How did you engage everybody?

We had Open Stage Ambassadors, every department had its own Open Stage Ambassador, who would come and engage and help shape the programme and then disseminate that with the rest of the staff.

And how many departments is that?

Every department, so, how many have we got?

Ten? Ten departments I suppose.

You know; from stage management to development, to young people, to finance, to marketing, box office productions, everyone would have someone there.

So how did staff feel empowered to affect change in the project as a whole?

Well I mean, everyone, everyone who knows these things had an equal voice and we would be evolving the project as we went along, so all of those people would have influenced the process.

Also, Charlotte, who was
the Project Manager of Open Stage,
her management style
is inclusive and collaborative.

So both those things would have happened
but also, no one was forced to do it
but people volunteered, they wanted
to be Open Stage Champions
and I think the premise was,
"Open Stage should help you
make your job better,
help you make your job more enjoyable.

What do you want it to be?"

And that's what it would be.

Thank you. So that covers
staff champions across the organisation.

What about using change-agents at management level?

We employed a project leader,
who also had an assistant,
and, in hindsight, that was a very good appointment.

We employed someone who used to work here in the past,
so understood us, and understood
the organisation and its history.

We knew instinctively that our box office staff
knew lots of our bookers personally.

We knew there were lots of connections with the bar.

People would come to the bar

and possibly never see a show,
but always hang out in the bar.
She knew all that, so she was able
to make the outreach work
not only work through one department,
so every department, she was able to click into
and help them understand and remind them
how they engage with the community, in that sense.
So we all... so there was an audit on all that kind of stuff,
which was good, but also
we employed someone who also had a community
engagement participation bias to their work.
We also made this project person leader
part of the senior management team,
even though they probably weren't
on the same sort of salary scale,
or have the same budget as that.
But we deliberately put them at that top table
so they could help shape the organisation.