

STAGECOACH SOUTH DEPOT CULTURE CHANGE

Stagecoach South were in a similar position to the rest of the Bus industry with passenger numbers declining. With routes, staffing and buses being utilised already as efficiently as possible they decided to take a new approach and focus instead on delivering the best customer experience possible.

The issue was that there was such a strong culture on efficient running, that the customer experience was not an equal consideration with complaints about Driver attitude being high across the region. Rightly, they realised if they wanted to increase revenue, it was not enough to just get people from A to B. They had to develop a much stronger proactive customer experience mindset within their Driver community to improve HOW they treated the customer.

After selecting Ember Real Results as it's preferred supplier, we spent time in each depot to really understand more about the business, how they operate, how they think and what was required to deliver the significant culture change needed.

WHAT WE FOUND

There was a big cultural norm towards efficiency that focused on keeping the buses operating and the perception that this was the only thing that mattered. The culture had become about punctuality and the only measures considered valuable were all about getting buses out and back in on time.

How the customer was treated while that was happening was incidental and the only time a driver was managed around this was when a complaint had come in that needed to be dealt with.

But this issue was not just with the Drivers. It was a systemic issue across the whole region where everybody played their part in creating this 'punctuality' culture, from the management team right the way down to each Driver.

Sending Drivers on a 'training course' would not change the culture. It needed a different approach. One where everybody would play their part in supporting the Drivers to start interacting with customers in a better way.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Culture change happens because everybody sees the benefit and knows how to play their part in making it happen. It is not enough to work with Drivers alone. So, we have delivered initiatives at the following levels:

- **Directors and Senior Management:** Working with the top team from the MD downwards to establish the 'North Star' guiding principles and understanding how they need to support their people to reinforce the message.
- **Middle Management:** Helping the teams that interact with the drivers on a day to day basis understand how they play a key part in enabling drivers to understand what is required of them, why that is important and how to role model that effectively.
- **Customer Champions:** By identifying those members of the Driver community who already instinctively understand the importance of a customer experience culture, we have been able to harness their enthusiasm and natural skillset to provide peer to peer support and encourage Drivers to buy into and behave differently towards customers.



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OUR SOLUTION:

Here at Ember Real Results one of our many talents is designing and delivering results focused, Culture Change programmes. We understand how changing a culture is not just about the processes you put in place but also about winning the hearts and minds of the people involved. With Change experts working on the team we work with our clients to ensure the solutions we create are modern, practical and that it equips your people with the skills to and desire to make Change happen quickly so it delivers the results you need.

HOW'S THAT GONE SO FAR?

We've delivered one day sessions to all the key levels outlined so far and these have been extremely well received with everyone bought into the Change and wanting to make it happen.

- **"After a few short months, we saw the NPS score jump up by 20!"**
- "This has opened my eyes to the bigger picture."
- "It's good to see the direction we are taking, very exciting!"
- "Enlightening and helpful. I have already started implementing this."

WHAT'S NEXT?

The programme won't affect the change overnight. While what we have done so far has been exceptionally well received and has generated a high level of enthusiasm to make the culture change possible, that momentum will need to be turned into real results through concrete actions. So we need to:

- **Senior Managers:** Continue to work with the Directors and the top team to develop their skills towards managing their people during the change as well as put in place key procedures and processes that will support the culture shift such as examining how they recruit and promoting live customer feedback schemes.
- **Coaching & Action Learning:** Working with key individuals and middle management groups to support them as they continue to deliver this change on a day to day basis.
- **Customer Champion Sessions:** Key to the whole project will be to harness the power of peer support and use their ideas and enthusiasm to drive forward the right approach to customers, so that the whole driving community begins to feel the benefits and adopts a similar way of working.

"We really valued that Ember has taken the time to visit all our depots and talk to a range of different staff and has already made a commitment to improving our service culture visible internally. We are delighted with the subsequent design and delivery of the sessions from Ember, which is addressing critical areas for improvement and we are now seeing a really positive ramping up in CX focused skills and behaviours; which is already translating into real results in our NPS." Keith Gait, Customer Service Director, Stagecoach

ABOUT EMBER

Ember Group is a specialist consulting, analytics and professional services group dedicated to transforming customer engagement and CX strategies and operations for major brands globally. With offices in London and Toronto, we deliver solutions to help organisations realise their customer service vision and increase commercial value from their service operations.

We have a team of specialists across various practices and disciplines, including service operations, digital, outsourcing, technology, commercial and finance, analytics, recruitment & search, training and L&D.

We offer a swift and effective way to answer crucial questions and discover hidden trends and patterns – providing actionable insights that relate purely to your business. Trust our skilled experts to help you understand what better looks like for your business.

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