

case study



For better
mental health

More than a 'gap filler'

Interim Finance Director adds real value to Mind



Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales which campaigns for the rights of everyone affected by mental health issues. The organisation helps people to take control over their mental health, providing information and advice, training programmes, grants and services through its network of around 180 local Mind associations.

The Requirements

When Mind's excellent Director of Finance and Resources had to take time off for personal reasons, the organisation needed to find an Interim Manager urgently. It wanted someone who could take over the role and ensure mission critical projects - including a large IT project and an office move were progressed and went ahead in the planned timescale with the full support of the team.



Mind approached award-winning Interim Provider, Russam GMS, which has a specialist Not-for-Profit Practice, with an urgent brief to find an experienced Finance Director for an initial three month project.

Russam GMS produced a short list of candidates that included Kris Murali, an experienced Finance Director with board level experience in the Private, Public and Not for Profit sectors. Within a week of his interview, Kris started at Mind as Interim Director of Finance and Resources on a three day a week contract for three months with responsibility for Finance, IT, HR and facilities.

The Challenges

The main challenges for Kris were to get to grips with his role as quickly as possible and to drive some of Mind's urgent business projects. Kris said, "Mind is a diverse organisation with 180 local Mind operations and a busy retail arm; I had to understand its functionality quickly with almost no learning curve and ensure business as usual. I was involved immediately in a number of projects, including an office move, an IT project and tasked also with attending the board meetings of Mind's trading arm, which is responsible for Mind charity shops."

The IT and office move projects involved considerable internal engagement with teams throughout the organisation to ensure their buy-in and understanding of the benefits consolidation might deliver, including the better utilisation of resources. Mind's head office is based in two adjacent offices in Stratford in London's East End. The planned move will bring together employees and teams in one building in order to foster closer working relationships and ensure better information sharing and greater synergy between teams. Kris held several

meetings and workshops with senior project leaders and employees at all levels to communicate the benefits of the new IT systems and the office move plans to engage them and to gain their full support. As a result of the workshops, Kris gained their consensus which has ensured that the IT project and office move is being viewed in a positive light.

Additionally, Kris was involved in board level meetings of Mind's trading arm and in time, he created a clear direction for the governance of the board of Mind's trading arm and also helped in the recruitment of a Managing Director to run the trading arm.

Kris says, "My assignment was extended from three to six months and during that time I worked in many areas of the organisation outside the initial brief. I engaged with senior project managers, employees at all levels and the board and gained a deep understanding of Mind. I was able to bring a fresh perspective to many areas and help people think differently. Employees are engaged, enthusiastic and committed to the IT Project and office move and there are new governance processes in place. Mind is a terrific organisation and I really enjoyed my time there."

Paul Farmer, Mind's Chief Executive, said, "Kris impressed us immediately with his ability to understand Mind. His ability to engage with senior project teams and employees at all levels within the business ensured that he added value in many areas - not just in the job brief. During his assignment - he really helped us progress our critical projects and our organisation."