



CASE STUDY: HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL – DAVID PARR, CEO

Q: So David, what organisational challenge triggered you to consider working with Sensei?

DP: We've just completed a very comprehensive efficiency programme, which resulted in our organisation downsizing its workforce and changing the way its workforce operated. So what we needed was to talk to some people who understood organisational change and how we might develop our organisation in its new format.

Q: And how has Sensei helped you and your Senior Leadership team?

DP: We wanted a different perspective on leadership, really. We've worked with a number of organisations and Sensei provided a different perspective. They brought a private sector perspective into the work that we were doing as a local authority. And that gave a different dimension and a different thought process and enabled us to think a little bit more cleverly about the work we've done historically and how we might improve going forward.

Q: And what outcomes did Sensei deliver for you?

DP: What we have been able to do is to re-energise the thinking of the senior managers and leadership within the organisation and brought some new and different thinking into the way we operate. Obviously, as a public sector organisation, there are certain rules and regulations that we have to abide by, but we still run a multi-million pound business and we are still very, very interested in doing that as efficiently and effectively as we possibly can. So, what Sensei were able to do, was to bring the experience that they've created over a number of years from some very large multi-national companies and we've been able to build on that learning and they've been able to share that learning with us, so that we can think in a more modern and a less traditional way about how we lead our organisation.

Q: So, how did you find working with Sensei?



DP: It was very interesting! It took a little time for us to understand each others' world, I think, in the first instance. But that was good, because that challenged a number of paradigms, it challenged a number of norms – both within Sensei, I think, and within the local authority. And that stimulated a lot of debate, a lot of interest, a lot of thought process and it's enabled us to develop a new way of thinking, a new way of doing business. So, it's been a very positive experience and one that we'd certainly recommend to others.

Q: *David, you've had a lot of experience when it comes to working with consultants. What, do you think, makes Sensei different from other consultancies you have worked with?*

DP: I think the most important thing when working with consultants is understanding what product you're looking for in the first instance. So, we took a little time in understanding each others' business and the way that the two organisations thought and if and when we can gel together. From initial discussions, there was an immediate chemistry, I think, between what we were looking for and what Sensei could provide. And when we developed that further into the developing of the programme of work, it was clear that Sensei had an understanding of what we are about as a local authority and equally an understanding of leadership in its very widest sense. And that really brought some added value to them as a partner to work with us because the way we approach our consultancies is that we are looking for partnership. There has to be a two-way exercise and Sensei were able to work with us in partnership, understanding our business and helping us to develop our business further.

Q: *Would you recommend Sensei to your fellow Chief Executives in other local authorities – and if so, what would you say to them?*

DP: I think we would recommend Sensei. I think anybody going into a new relationship would have to understand the basis of that relationship and it wouldn't be a traditional arrangement, it would be something that local government would have to move out of some of their comfort zones to work with Sensei. But I think that's really positive. It's been positive for us, because we've been forced out of our comfort zones by a number of external factors and Sensei have helped us to develop new ways of thinking, new ways of operating and sometimes you get better outcomes if you move out of your comfort zones. And Sensei have helped us to do that and have been supportive in what we've been trying to do.