HRMB Amanda

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SPEAKERS

Amanda Arrowsmith, Mervyn Dinnen

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Mervyn Dinnen 00:00

The HR Happy Hour Network is proudly supported by our friends at Workhuman. Here's a wild stat: six in 10 employees have never been meaningfully recognized for a work anniversary. Think about that: 5, 10, 20 years of someone's life, and too often the moment falls flat. Workhumans service milestones makes recognition more personal, memorable, and impactful. Milestone tracking happens automatically through your HRIS. The right colleagues are inspired to share stories of congratulations, and employees get access to the rewards they actually want. Ready to make your milestones meet the moment with Workhuman? Click on the banner on this episode's page, or follow the link in the show notes to learn more. Thank you for joining us. Welcome to the HR Means Business podcast, which is part of The HR Happy Hour Network. I'm your host Mervyn Dinnen. Today, I'm delighted to be joined by Amanda Arrowsmith Chief People Officer, Transformation Lead at the Royal British Legion. Quite a few listeners will probably know her from her previous role as People and Transformation Director at the CIPD in the UK. Amanda, welcome to The HR Means Business Podcast. We're going to be talking about delivering change today, which is possibly one of the most important things that HR leaders do. But first, would you like to introduce yourself, and maybe for listeners not from the UK. Explain who the Royal British Legion are.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 01:44

Thank you. Hello. It's lovely to join you. So, as Merv says, I'm Amanda Arrowsmith. So, I'm currently I've got the longest job title in the world because we're a charity and we're we have we're one of those things that have all those hierarchies in. So, I'm the executive director of people and culture at the Royal British Legion. But as Merv says, I am focused on change and transformation. So the Royal British Legion is the largest UK charity supporting the Armed Forces Network. So we have a number of different roles. A lot of people will know us for the work that we do in remembrance, so they'll think of us when they think about the poppy and the poppy appeal. But we also do a lot of work around supporting the armed forces community. So we have six care homes that are for armed forces communities. We also, so last year we had 100,000 calls to our helpline. We helped over 20,000 armed forces families, and we do anything from helping to access war pensions to helping people with with debt and money advice. We also are one of the largest employers of dementia nurses outside of the NHS here in the UK. Whilst we're UK based, we do actually have branches across the world. So we've got over 2000 branches. We've got nearly 180,000 members, but we also have 50,000 volunteers and our 2000 staff. So we are broad and wide, and I've been there about a year, having worked in HR for about 30 years. Last 15 or 20 around transformation. Just one more thing: I'm currently doing my doctorate in transformation and change, focused on the not profit sector. So talking about change is kind of my happy place.

M Mervyn Dinnen 03:20

I'm I'm pleased to hear it. So I suppose my first question to to set the scene for listeners is is what needed to change in the organization, and what was it? Although I think you've you've you've given you've alluded to it already, but what was it that made the scale or complexity of that change particularly challenging in an organization like the Royal British Legion.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 03:43

So we've been around for over 100 years, and we are we've got a long legacy and a long history. And when our current Director General Mark joined nearly three years ago, one of the things he asked to happen in his kind of first and second year was really to review our strategy and look at that, and along with our board of trustees, we spent a lot of time developing a new strategy. So our strategy to 2035, recognizing that we needed to be a fit and proper charity to support the armed forces network and armed forces community of today, which is quite different to perhaps when people think about remembrance and they think about the poppy appeal. So we brought a new strategy, and along with that, when you bring in a 10-year strategy, often what happens is you look at your processes and systems, you look at where you are, and like many large organizations and charities, we've got legacy IT issues, we've got legacy process and organization issues. So it's an opportunity for us to look at that. So whilst we're not doing a root and branch transformation of everything, we are investing in making sure that we are organized, set up, and enabled to provide the best support that we can provide to a modern armed forces.

M Mervyn Dinnen 04:53

Okay, so the how do you go about turning the ambition of what you want to achieve into a workable plan. I mean, it's how do you decide what what to prioritize, what can maybe wait, how much change the organization can maybe absorb at once, or is it something over a longer period?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 05:15

Yeah. So the benefit of having a 10 year plan is you're able to kind of cut that into chunks. So what we've done is we've got the first three years, which we're calling our short-term goals, and within that, we've got a number of goals across the organization that are both about developing new services and improving services, but also a little bit of fixing the roof while the sun shines. And that's kind of where I've been focused this year. So this is about making sure we've got the foundational elements in place that we can best deliver going forward. So we've looked at our HR structure, we've looked at our IT structure, we've looked at fundraising, we've done lots of things around the organization and that design of the organization. So people, processes, systems, and obviously my point of view is often about people. The other side of that is something that you just touched on: is making sure we're change ready. Change isn't easy. Change can be hard. We've seen lots of transformation happen, where you move something from here to here, but that's not necessarily change. So one of the things that I focus on is how can we make sure that people are engaged, involved, that we take them with us, that also they have the right skills and the right structure and the place to cope with that change. Doing it over a long period allows us to prioritize. So, what do we fix first to enable us to do that? So, for example, like lots of people, we're putting a new CRM in. That's going to take a couple of years, but you need to do that in order to do some of your other change. And we'd need to. We're building those skills at the same time, are still running the charity and running the business, so it's building skills whilst running that charity, which can be challenging because you'll know you often add things onto other people and you add work onto people, and then you wonder why it doesn't work or why it doesn't stick. So we're trying to do a bit of both.

M Mervyn Dinnen 06:56

Okay, and that I suppose you know communicating that to people, particularly if you're giving them more work or slightly different responsibilities, is I'm guessing particularly in the kind of sector you're in something that has to be done fairly sensitively.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 07:12

Yeah, it's so any any change that impacts people is going to have an impact on their sense of self, on their sense of agency. There's also that perception around that change. Why are we changing? You know, because no one's doing a bad job. It's not that we, we, you know, we weren't failing and we're fixing it. This is about us improving and having those incremental improvements to make sure that we we can support the armed forces community moving forward. And it has changed, you know, over the last 40 years. That community itself has changed significantly, and we need to make sure we're there. The communication side is really interesting. We've got a really strong internal communications team, but we also recognize that, like many organizations, where your people are all over the country, and you know we've only got 300 people that are office based. Everyone else is based out in the community, or or at home, or doing in care homes, for example. Putting stuff on an intranet doesn't always work, but it is the easy thing to do. And we've got a great intranet, and there's lots of great content in there. What we've had to focus on is how do we equip our managers to feel empowered and enabled to make that message work for them locally. So, what tools can we give them around the information of what we're changing, when we're changing and why we're changing it, that they can then adapt and use locally in the setting that works for them. So, in a care home, for example, popping something on an internet is not the best way of doing something, because our colleagues they're not on their computers every day, they're not logging in and seeing it straight away. So that has to be done through giving our managers the information so they're confident to share that in their team meetings, putting it in other ways of sharing information, so posters and you know those kind of old-fashioned things that people wants to go digital. But actually, we're still very analog in our care homes. We need to make sure we have something called the National Remembrance Gardens, which is it does exactly what it says on its tin. So it's got 430 remembrance memorials across the site, and within that, we've got 300 volunteers. We've got everyone, you know, we've got people running catering, we've got people showing people around the site, we've got reception. Again, they're not working in a traditional knowledge-based work away. So they have a fantastic newsletter which is specific for that site that goes to both employees and volunteers, and so how do we get things in a newsletter in language that works for them and that is meaningful for them? So I think our main thing is agree what our why is, be clear about our top level message, but then equip our leaders and our managers and our local leaders to adapt that for their audience locally and give them the skills and the tools to support that.

M Mervyn Dinnen 09:45

No, I get that. I get that. The were you were there any activities that you kind of stopped or started approaching differently, should we say, to create more capacity for people?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 10:00

Yeah, so when I first joined, we had we were looking at bringing in a new HR information system, so a new HRIS, which is so if I think specifically about the enabling function that I I look after, functions that I look after, and we were trying we were boiling the ocean. We were trying to get everything in there. We were trying to you know this thing was going to sweep up for us and do absolutely everything, and the reality was we were losing why we were doing it, and the reason we were doing it is we needed a system that worked for our people. We needed something that enabled managers, enabled people to work within our pay and our HR systems and our learning systems in a way that worked for them and worked locally. We were creating this fantastic beast that was fantastic for payroll and HR, but actually it forgot about the end user. It forgot about that user experience, so we stopped that, put it on pause, and took some time to understand what it is. And now what we're doing is a much smaller project, but on an incremental basis, where our main principle is: what does this give for the users? What does this give for the people that are going to be using it? And then the back office is important, but actually, if we have a fantastic data and analytics reporting system, but a manager can't approve sickness or holiday in a way that works for them, there's no point us doing it. So that's one that we stopped. I think the other thing is we we've looked at our line manager training, so we were doing some really ad hoc line manager training, and we kind there was there were quite a lot of chalk and talk. There was quite a lot of like we put something in knee learning, or it was it was wasn't really experiential, and it wasn't really relevant for individuals. So my team went away and completely redesigned our line manager training. So we we didn't stop doing our mandatory training. We continued that. We provided support where we needed it, and we provided skills and development. But we've completely redesigned our line manager training, and we're rolling that out in a way now that makes it make sense to people in different buckets, so different modules and how that works. We started with understanding our strategy, and then we've moved on to managing performance and having conversations and finding things that work for people, again, at the right time. It's at that point that they need it, but in the way that they need it. So we have stopped some things. I think, like a lot of charities and like a lot of organizations, we provide services that make a difference, and it's it's hard to stop those services if they're no longer perhaps making as much of a difference. So one of the things that the team are doing, and I'm I'm periphery to it, but I have had some involvement, is really understanding our impact. So how what does that look like? And from that, I think what we'll do is: what are our new services? What are the additional services we provide? What do we perhaps do less of what do we re-engineer? What do we look at? And that will happen over time. But we're just into year two of our 10-year strategy, so we're still in that the first part of those short-term goals, and that's going to be really important. We've got a really good director who's he's customer and customer technology and transformation. A chap called Steve Blackburn, and he's just got this fantastic enterprise view of how we manage that that those big projects and what that looks like. And he's building a brilliant team to support that, not just from kind of that portfolio project management, but also to make sure we have a enterprise view of all the projects that are happening because there is a risk, isn't there? When you you do so many things that nobody knows what's going on, and do it in a way that actually means it sticks. So perhaps do a bit less now, slow people down a little bit so that we get it right, so that it works, so that actually we can then build on and build forward.

M Mervyn Dinnen 13:37

Now, how do you go about, I suppose, building alignment? I guess amongst senior leaders, because there are different priorities, maybe different views about the way forward. Maybe not everybody has bought into what you're trying to do. And what what did you find helped? I suppose create agreement. You know, if you like, turn agreement into consistent decisions.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 14:01

Yeah. So the first thing is to tie everything back to our strategy. So our strategy is we have three main pillar, four pillars, three main pillars, and then the enabling functions within our strategy, which are connect, remember, support. And for every major piece of work outside the day-to-day BAU, we're working on how do we tie that back to the strategy? So, how can you show that what you're doing will improve the sense of connection across the armed forces community, or works towards our remembrance goals, or provides support, or could it could do more than one? So, you could run an event that's a remembrance event, and perhaps through that you build connection because you build camaraderie, and within that you might have some caseworkers there that are providing support. So the first thing we did was be really clear on how does the activity we're doing tie back to that strategy. Now that was brought in by the exec board, but also by the senior leadership team, and the strategy was developed with those people. It wasn't developed by some consultants in a room and then imposed on the organization. It was developed over a year with them being involved in that and develop and and working to build that together. The second thing is is through the way that we communicate and sharing our stories. So we do the same. You know, we do the standard things. We have our town hall. We have our manager briefings. We have an email that goes out to all line managers every two weeks with updates. But what we've done is made sure that really rich in stories of where things make difference, and then tie those back to how that fits into our strategy. The thing that we've done this year, so our year starts on the first of October, and the thing that we've done this year is everybody across the organization has a corporate objective. So when we've been building our objectives and what people are doing for their business across the year. We've got one core objective for everybody, which ties back to the strategy and our values, and everybody will be assessed against that. So we're doing it in different ways. We're doing it in that really core. This is our strategy. This is how we report. We then do it in these are the projects and the additional work we're doing. How does that tie in to connect, remember, support. How does that tie into what we're delivering? And the third way is every day in what you're doing, come back to our purpose. Where does that work? And working with our managers. The other thing I think we've done in terms of a foundational to make that work is we've spent quite a lot of time focusing on our senior leadership team. So we've got our exec board, and then we've got a group of 20 directors who run the business on a day-to-day basis. And we've spent a lot of time building connections across that senior leadership team. We bring them together pretty regularly, and when we bring them together, we make sure we build in time, so they're not just watching, listening to PowerPoint presentations, or hearing about how the business is forming. We build in time a for their development, so we run a development session each time we bring them together. But B, we bring them time to share what they're working on and share those connections to really help that horizontal working. I think, like a lot of organizations post COVID, we were quite vertical in the way we worked. We're doing great work in our verticals. So I was doing great work in my fundraising area. I was doing great work in my services area, and we weren't necessarily building those verticals. Those are quite human. You can put systems and processes in support that, but a lot of that is

about people and talking and building relationships. So allowing people the time and space and actually kind of making that part of their job has been really important to us to bring that together. It's not perfect. There are still things we see where perhaps someone will go out and say we're going to bring bring in this new system, and the IT guys go, Yeah, you've not actually spoken to us about that, and we probably need to understand it from a systems and security point of view. It still happens. We're still dealing with humans, perfect, imperfect humans, but what we're doing is creating the right environment for sharing, for collaboration, and for building those connections, and and and supporting that with tools, but not making the tool the thing.

M Mervyn Dinnen 17:52

Okay, no, I get that. So when you're kind of shaping change, you obviously need to involve as many people as you can, colleagues, you know, in in, and I suppose buying into what you're doing. So, are there examples of of kind of where kind of you've you've you've brought them in, but also where maybe listening to their experience and their perspectives on things led to maybe adjusting some of the approach towards the change.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 18:21

Yeah. So I think an example I can talk to because it's within my team is around our employee engagement survey. Employee engagement surveys. Sometimes they can be a bit of tick box. People do them every couple of years. They feel they have to do them. What we've done this last six months is spend a lot of time understanding what it is that people want to learn and how they're going to use that and what that looks like going forward. We're working with our partners to develop both an initial survey, but then also pulse surveys that actually will move the needle and will help people to understand what's happening in their organization, and not just that we get a number every three years that tells us that we're 80% engaged, but actually gives people some real tangible information, data, and analytics that they can then take back and work in their organization. It's people aren't used to being asked, so I've worked places where you you know you have to have 30 people in the room because everybody wants to know what's going on, and one of the challenges we that we have we had at the RBL and we're working through is that sometimes people would make a decision here and then would inform afterwards. What I don't want to create is that everybody has to be involved and everybody has to have a mission. But what we do want is a structure and a an organization where people feel that they can add value, so they feel that they can come forward and say, "Why I know that's not my area, actually, I I can add something to that. So what we did with the engagement survey is we looked, we spoke to managers about what do they need, what do they want. We spoke to employees about what is it you want to tell us, what does that look like, what do you feel you're not getting the opportunity to say, and how can we give you that opportunity to say that? And then we reframed some of our questions and the way in which we're asking that question to make them much more natural language and relevant for the people that are working for us and bringing that back in. Got a really active employee voice network as well, which has been really helpful. So we take things to them, and and and they they're great at saying yeah no I don't like that and no my people won't like that and that doesn't work for us it's almost like a a panel you know like a customer panel that you might take things through to test things with they're fantastic for that and they um they're not shy at telling us when they

don't think something's a good idea. Um it's about how we act on that. There are still times when decisions are made and those decisions need to be implemented and taken forward. You know, we are still running an organization that needs to move things forward. I think the final thing that's working really well is that when we put a project team together, we're really clear that it's their accountability and their responsibility to do things. And if they reach decisions, we've got a way in which decisions are approved and which they go through that doesn't undermine. So we don't have people who make a decision and then someone else goes, "Oh, actually, no, we weren't going to do that. We trust people and empower them to make that. Again, it's not perfect. We're still working on it. We're still driving it through, but it's hopefully creating that environment. I think we we have a little bit of a risk because we are so we've got so many people that don't work collectively. So we've got caseworkers all over the country. We've got membership engagement officers. We've got people all over working in different areas. That I think sometimes people might feel that they their voice isn't heard in the same way, so we we we need to work on that a bit more. We need to improve that, give make sure people have the opportunity. We're non unionized, so we have to work through our employee voice group. But I think there's the will is there. The other thing that I really like is that Mark, our director general, he he's really open to hearing feedback. We have our town halls, like everybody does, but those questions are not pre-screened, and anyone can ask anything, and they do. They're not scared to ask us the difficult things sometimes, and it's good that they do, and it's good that we answer it because at least then they know we're not shying away and we're open to answering questions.

M Mervyn Dinnen 22:20

Yeah. Now we've talked a little bit about managers, and managers often are the ones who carry most the responsibility for making change work within teams, within areas, locally. So, how did you go about preparing and supporting them? I mean, they're dealing with uncertainty themselves because it's change, and so what did you? I know you've touched on it a bit, but I think it would be useful for people to, particularly those going through change, to do how you prepare managers themselves for the uncertainty.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 22:52

Yeah, sure. I mean, look, managers are your secret sauce, aren't they? They're the ones that actually can make things fail or or not because they know their people, and they're they're they're actually the ones that are going to deliver that. So there's a couple of things that we do. One, it it sounds so simple, but so many organizations miss it. Is that communications cascade? So when do you tell people? How do you make sure your managers have things that they have the tools available to them, so that when something is rolled out or when something becomes more public knowledge, they feel able to have those conversations. So I'm going to use. We've just introduced for our main charity. So we talk about main charity and care because they're slightly different in terms of the way they're structured. For our main charity, we've just introduced a new pay reward framework. What we did was before we went live with that is we ran manager sessions to make sure they could ask the questions that were difficult. Then we produced a manager toolkit to give them the information. We allowed them to come back and go. Actually, you haven't answered this question. We need a bit more on that. We made sure we created that space. We we have our manager email, as I mentioned, that goes out every two weeks, so they know things before they get announced, before they get promoted. So give them the information to give them the confidence. The other thing we've been doing is around this training, this manager line manager training program. So making sure that we're increasing, improving their skills around communication, helping them to perhaps handle some of those more difficult questions, give them a route to come back with questions, but also be really clear on our why when we're doing things. There's nothing worse for a manager, is there, to parrot what the FAQ says, but to not be able to explain the why, because they're the ones that are going to get it in the net. They're the ones that people are talking to. So we've had to be really clear on our why. They sound so simple. So these are things that sound so simple, and often the most effective things are the simplest things. But we've made sure that we're driving that through. That we are making it happen on every project, sharing that information, not just once. So we'll share it in different ways. We'll do it in briefing calls. We'll do it on the manager email. We'll do it on our intranet. We'll do it through team meetings. So, for example, on Monday next week, I'm going to one of our directors Team meeting to to provide some information about some things that are coming up in the future, so they're hearing it actually from people and provide them the routes to ask the questions. I think that there will always be some managers who feel less able or don't feel that they've had enough information, and our job as leaders in that space, I think, is to make sure that we are giving them roots to come back and ask questions, and giving them routes to make to give them the confidence that they can do that. And that takes time. That you know, when you're busy, that can be something that gets lost. Well, we've rolled it, we rolled it out. Let's move on to the next thing. But actually, you need to provide that time. You need to give people that space, and that's the best thing that you can do. Your communities help each other, give them that opportunity to help each other. But as I said at the beginning, when we were talking about how we communicate, allow them to make that relevant for their part of the organization, so give them the scaffolding, give them the tools, give them the confidence, but then don't be so prescriptive that this is exactly what you must say and how you say it. Make sure you give them the confidence and the tools that they can then make that relevant for their part of the organization.

M Mervyn Dinnen 26:16

Okay. Now, in any, I suppose, large scale change program. There's going to be a bit of resistance, a bit of fatigue, a bit of loss of momentum. How do you, or what, what helped you and the organization decide where to keep going, where to maybe slow down, or if maybe you know you were getting feedback that that there needed to be a bit of a change of course, you know. How did you react to that, and how did you decide when to, I suppose, get that feedback and when to almost push on through?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 26:51

Yeah, I mean, we're still we're still really in the thick of that. You know, I've only been there a year, and and that's not that long, so we're still very much in the thick of that. And and there's a little bit of learning while we go and allowing us to not be to to give ourselves the time and space to do that. I don't think I always get it right, and and sometimes there are deadlines. You know, we are working in a business. We have an end of year. We have a date by which we have to do things. There are, you know, sometimes we have deadlines we have to work around. I think it's about you can't be so wedded to the outcome, and you can't allow your ego to be so wedded to that outcome that you miss something that's really important. There's no point doing something for the first of October if you do it so quickly that actually no one's going to adopt it, and you're going to have to do it again the following year. So I had a conversation this morning with one of our directors who had wanted to do something before Christmas. We've had an honest conversation about what we need to do and what needs to happen. And I've said I'd much rather we were able to share with people a really clear plan of where we want to get to, what we want our end point to be, and that this is the process we're going to go through over the next four months, and do it for the first of April. Sorry, five months, and do it for the first of April, because that will give people the opportunity to input. It'll give people the space to have those conversations, but it also means that we don't have to do it again. So sometimes I think you you just said, what do you slow down? Sometimes you got to slow down to get things done once, I think the other thing is we different people will make sense of things at their own pace and their own pace and time. And sometimes you're you're you're going to have to go ahead when perhaps some people aren't there. What's important is that you don't just go well it's done and that's it. You need to allow people the space to have that conversation. There will be times within organizations that decisions are made that people don't like. I think you've come back to. There's not. I think you have to be really clear on your why, and if you be really clear on your why, you get to a point that's done. It's about helping people through that change in a right way, in the right way, and not accepting that one size fits all. I'm not accepting that we're going to do this in this way. Everyone's going to have to take it. You have to recognize that different people have different. They'll be coming from different places and different feelings on it. The other thing I think that's that's really important is allowing people to make sense of change rather than give sense to them. So you will feel like this. You will feel like this. This is how it's going to be. That's sense giving. That's your leaders going. This is how you're going to feel about it. And that might not be right. You have to allow people the space to have sense making. And sometimes something that you think is a brilliant idea and is going to be great for everyone. People might come back and say, "Well, well, no, we don't like that. That's a change, and we we like the way it is. So I don't know. You're putting a new system in, and you're going to make something easier. But people like their system; they're wedded to it. So you're going to have to go through that. What does that mean? What's the loss of agency for them? What's the loss of identity for? How can you help them work through that? And and we we're facing that with new systems, with new processes, with changes in teams, and we will continue to face that. And that's just about being a fair and open environment, allowing people to have concerns. There might be deadlines though, and sometimes you have to. It's like parents, isn't it? You get to a point where you go, "No, this is it. I've asked you to clean your room three times. You give me all the arguments why you won't clean your room. You have to do it now. I'm 53. I don't know what happens after my mum says now. I've never been brave enough to push past now, and I think in organizations sometimes we have to say now.

M Mervyn Dinnen 30:41

Okay, so what? How did you know? You know, when you're on a program like this, how do you know whether change is actually taking hold beyond completing, I suppose, the project milestones and and and kind of you know time timelines? What what signals tell you it's improving how people work, and and what do you do when the signals you're looking for maybe aren't there?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 31:05

So there's a couple things for me. One is the types of questions people ask. So if they move on from the why questions to the how questions, then that for me means they've already they've already moved on to oh this is happening now. I want to figure out how it's happening. So you know, we're gonna we're gonna structure in this way. The team's gonna be dealing this with this, and and and instead of going, well, why are we changing, and why is that team moving there, and why is it? But they move to okay, well, how how will we deal with this project, and how will we deal with this particular issue? And when they move to the how, that for me is some change adoption. So you're starting to see them go, oh, that's a shift. That's an interesting way of thinking about it, and so that's that's always really quite an exciting time for me when you see people move from the why to the how. The other thing is is thinking about your metrics and your measures at the beginning. So, is that change that you get a higher NPS? Is that change that you you you deal with a service more quickly? Is that change that you reach more beneficiaries? Is that change that people are better able to articulate how they've spent their money? They can come back to. So you have to be, in some ways, I think for a project to manage that, you need to be clear. What are those measures going to be looking at? Things for me that I that signify change are the shift from why to how. I think there is a a yes and rather than a yes but that happens. So you you know you'll know the improvisation training about using yes and rather than yes but. I think when people start going oh yes yes yes and, you can see that actually they're starting to get excited about it and they do that. And the other thing is actually have you achieved the things you wanted for? So if you're putting in a new telephony system and you're starting to access more people and more people are able to get through, and therefore you're you're able to support more beneficiaries, perhaps you're seeing a bit less sickness. Perhaps you're seeing your engagement scores in that area increase. Those are all signals that change has been successful, but yeah, I think sometimes it's about being really clear what it is. So, what you're shifting? Is it spending less on this? Is it doing more of this? But then there's those non tangible signals, which are the yes and, and the move from why to how.

M Mervyn Dinnen 33:19

Okay, it's been a fascinating conversation. We're, I suppose, coming to my last question, but there's a lot of information here, and hopefully, listeners are finding this very, very interesting. Looking back, I guess you have to say, although you're not at the end of it yet, of course. What would you repeat? What would you do differently when it comes to maybe also supporting different teams or your own team, and what advice would you give a chief people officer who's about to start leading change on a similar scale? How to go about it?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 33:54

So when I joined the RBL, one of the first things I had to do was really restructure the people team, and I had to I had to go through our own quite challenging and quite difficult change. I I took too much on myself in that, and I wish I'd asked for a bit more help a bit bit sooner. So if I were going back and doing it differently, I'd have asked for help a bit sooner. I think the other thing is, I one of the challenges with successful change is we don't spend enough time in the planning. That means that we could get things right in the execution. If we spent a bit more time working through the planning, working through the what ifs, working through the how do you know what how does this work? What's the worst thing that could happen? You know that pre mortem activity. If we spent a bit more time there, I think we'd have more success on on the way of going through. And then get to the other thing is, and this is a really challenging one because everyone wants to be in the room. But how do you make sure you've got the right voices in the room? How do you make sure you build that trust across your senior team? That actually, if I'm not in the room, it doesn't matter because I know that my director of services or my director of safeguarding is going to be bringing that view because we we clear and and and building that trust is really important. And I think I came in. People that know me will know I came in all guns blazing. I came in to get stuff done. You know, I, I did interim work for 18 years. It's what you do. You've got four weeks to learn the business, and then you get stuff done. If I had the time again, I'd have spent a little bit more time building that trusted network, building that trusted team, so that when it came to execution, I wasn't then having to kind of bring people up speed and bring them with me. Actually, I'd already spent a lot of time building that trust, so that's what I'd shift now. However, saying all of that, I can't get over what the team have delivered the last year, and I'm thinking particularly from the people team. They've done so much. I've got a brilliant team in place. I've got some excellent people who are genuinely thriving in their roles, so much more than I-I probably realized they could have done. And that's-it's-it's a delight. Got lots more to do. We are one year into a very long plan, but it's-it's exciting, and and I know that we will provide fantastic services for our beneficiaries, for the wider armed forces community through delivering this and through delivering it well.

M Mervyn Dinnen 36:31

Amanda, it's been pleasure to talk to you today. People listening, if they want to either follow the journey of your change or maybe reach out and connect with you themselves. What's what's the best way to connect?

A Amanda Arrowsmith 36:45

LinkedIn is probably the best thing. So find me on LinkedIn, Amanda Arrowsmith. There's only a few of us. I'm the I'm the one that comes up with people with the big black glasses. You'll see me. Yeah. So LinkedIn would be probably the best one. You'll see the Legion in its all its glory over. So we're currently around the end of middle of October, we're about to go into Remembrance Tide, so the poppy appeal starts, and as we move up to the 11th of November, so you'll see the Legion in all its glory. You'll see the poppies all over the place. Please do connect. Please do find out more about us, and yeah, happy to share.

M Mervyn Dinnen 37:18

Amanda, it's been a pleasure to talk to you today. Thank you.

A Amanda Arrowsmith 37:22

Thanks.