

CASE STUDY

THE REACH PROJECT



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The REACH National Role Model project launched in December 2008 and is one of a series of project groups set up as successors to the Stephen Lawrence Steering Group and the Race Equality Advisory Panel to help young black boys and men achieve their full potential. It is funded by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) and managed by the Windsor Fellowship, a charity at the forefront of innovative educational and leadership programmes.

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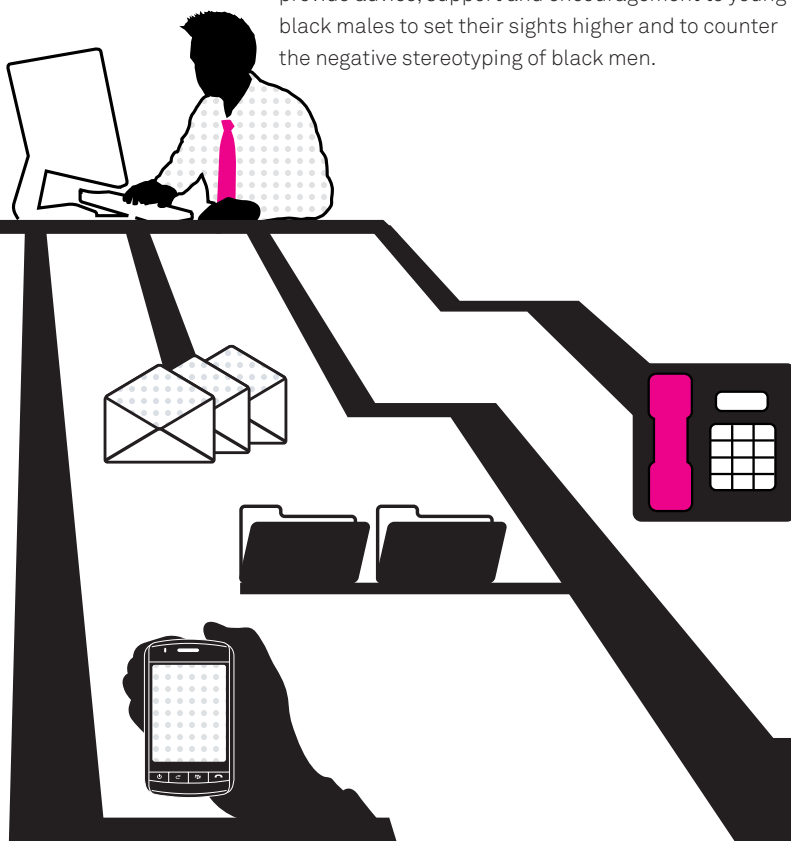
The recommendations for REACH were formulated by a group of men and women from the black community, drawing upon their experience within the private, public and community sectors to outline how positive black role models and support from the education sector could help raise the aspirations and attainments of young black boys and men. This led to the first ever government programme for young black males, selecting twenty successful black men to be REACH National Role Models.

Their role is to visit schools and youth projects to provide advice, support and encouragement to young black males to set their sights higher and to counter the negative stereotyping of black men.

They were also tasked with building a much larger and wider programme of mentoring in their individual regions and communities to collaborate with national and local media in support of young black boys and men to raise their ambitions.

The REACH National Role Models were all selected from a wide variety of industry sectors and were dispersed across the UK and they would be working with CLG and the Windsor Fellowship team. As a result, one of the immediate challenges was the need for effective communication and collaboration between stakeholders, especially when the combination of stakeholders created a partly virtual organisation. Therefore, effective and efficient communication and collaboration were going to be vital for planning, storing and distributing information.

One of the REACH role models present at these early discussions was Piers Linney, the Joint Chief Executive and major shareholder of Outsourcery, a Microsoft Gold Partner and provider of innovative hosted IT and communications solutions. Following some discussion about their requirements, Piers offered to set-up the REACH virtual organisation with a business class email and document sharing solution.



“REACH needed communications solutions that allowed them to collaborate and share information securely. The answer was obvious; Outsourcery specialises in providing those solutions”

Piers Linney - Joint CEO, Outsourcery

SIMPLIFIED SOLUTIONS

Once agreed, it took Outsourcery just 48 hours to get REACH's new solutions up and running, using Microsoft SharePoint and hosted Exchange 2007, all hosted at Outsourcery's secure state-of-the-art data centres. The solution is accessed by any member of the REACH team through an Internet connected computer or web-enabled mobile device.

Now everyone associated with REACH has their own designated mailbox and access to distribution lists which enable the members to send emails to different groups within the REACH network. Plus, Exchange allows them to share calendars, meetings, tasks and contact information so everyone can see when others are available, be kept informed of 'things to do' and can access shared contact details whenever they need them.

The SharePoint intranet solution from Outsourcery was customised with REACH's branding to give it the right look and feel; it was a very simple solution taken out of the box from Outsourcery's product range and implemented by their skilled engineers. One of the first tasks undertaken by the REACH role models, once their intranet was fully operational, was to post full personal biographies of themselves and their careers on the site so they could get to know each other better. They were after all, a group of strangers brought together by their personal achievements and shared objective to help young black men!

Conrad Sackey, CEO, Windsor Fellowship, comments: "The software has been invaluable and has provided all REACH stakeholders with immediate access to an integrated business class email and intranet solution without the need for investment in hardware. This allowed us to focus financial and human resources on providing additional frontline services to the REACH project's beneficiaries. Users are geographically dispersed and the ability for users to securely access information from any computer and even mobile devices allowed us to efficiently bring together the twenty role models and the wider REACH team."

"REACH uses our solutions the same way businesses with remote workers who need to access company information would."

Piers Linney - Joint CEO, Outsourcery

Today, members of the REACH team are using the intranet, which integrates with their email to store contact details for the REACH community, to share news, announcements, documents and calendars, capture dates and attendees of REACH events and to ensure visibility of everyone's whereabouts. An email alert lets everyone know when a new document is posted on the site and they can log in to look at different documents with their mobile devices or a laptop connected to the Internet.

REACHING HIGHER

The REACH Project is estimated to have saved approximately £20,000 over 36 months* by implementing Outsourcery's hosted IT solutions because they cost in the region of 53%* less than installing similar solutions on-premise. So instead of paying for server and software installation and maintenance REACH pays a small monthly fee to keep their applications running on Outsourcery's hosted platform – and they avoid the cost of hardware, licenses and the costs of managing and maintaining the solutions themselves.

*Figures are approximate and based on research by Outsourcery.

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