



Golding Homes

MGI Case Study



An ongoing journey of culture change and increased employee engagement



“When we talk about values and behavioural frameworks, people sometimes think, ‘what does that mean? And how do I bring it to life?’ What I like about the MGI Toolkit is how practical and accessible it is. It’s easy to use because it just makes sense. The beauty of this methodology is that once you’ve learnt it and understand how to apply it, you have skills for life. You know what your Responsibility and Choice Circles are, you understand the various Positive 1st Response pieces and you can just roll them out.”

Fiona Deal, Executive Director of People, Digital and Change, Golding Homes

We first partnered with Golding Homes in 2021 to deliver a customer service training programme as part of a wider innovative programme called ‘What About Shirley?’. This programme was named Think Shirley to focus participants onto the customer represented by Shirley. Golding Homes is the largest housing provider in Maidstone owning or managing over 8,000 properties and serving the needs of over 21,000 residents across Kent. The Think Shirley Toolkit using MGI’s Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit was designed to deliver industry-leading customer service excellence throughout every level of the organisation, from resident services to internal departments, and led to a tangible impact on customer service satisfaction ratings and 127 unsolicited compliments from customers.

An intrinsic part of the Golding culture

The leadership team at Golding recognises the Think Shirley strategy is fundamental in delivering the company’s culture change and achieving buy in from colleagues. In Summer 2022 it became clear further work was needed to ensure it became an intrinsic part of the Golding identity, as Golding Homes’ Executive Director of People, Digital and Change, Fiona Deal, explains.

“I’m familiar with the benefits of the MGI method having worked with the team for a few years now across several different companies - including working directly with Mary Gober, original co-founder of MGI and the creator of the Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit. On joining Golding in May 2022, I was aware of the previous rollout of the excellent Think Shirley / MGI initiative. I do remember thinking it wasn’t alive and kicking across the organisation. I didn’t hear the distinctive MGI language and methodology in action and knew we were missing out. It was clear the vital embedding process had not been followed through.

“I firmly believe that for any training to be successful it must be role modelled by leadership and woven into every aspect of what a company does to bring it to life and embed it throughout the fabric of the organisation. I knew we should be seeing the Think Shirley initiative clearly threaded through our company culture and everything our people say and do from the senior leadership right through to the frontline; from team meetings, customer interactions and repairs to communications and policy documents.”

Fiona and the team decided a re-set was needed, so delivered a series of MGI Think Shirley Toolkit Refresher Workshops to the entire company during Autumn 2022. Their call to create a group of MGI-trained colleague advocates led to the formation of a cohort of 30 Golding Champions who can mentor and support their colleagues daily. The organisation also invested in training four internal trainers with full MGI Train-the-Trainer Accreditation. All of which combines to ensure a cohesive, ongoing training and embedding process that continually reaches every part of the organisation.

“There’s always more to learn – I think that’s the beauty of the Toolkit. The more you do and the deeper you go, the richer the experience and the more valuable it becomes. I would never say we have ‘done’ the Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit, we have ticked that box, because there’s always more to do. For me, the process is organic and constantly evolving within and throughout the organisation.”

Fiona Deal, Executive Director of People, Digital and Change, Golding Homes



Embedding is key

Fiona fully appreciates that the embedding process is key to the long-lasting success of the training programme. Following the refresher training there are many innovative ways in which Fiona and her colleagues are ensuring this is achieved at Golding.

The MGI Toolkit is threaded throughout **Golding’s Gold Standards**, explicitly linking together the Company Values and Think Shirley mindset, language and actions into an integrated behavioural package.

Golding managers are trained to role model the Think Shirley Toolkit and incorporate the language into everything they do, including Team Meetings and everyday communications - for example, ensuring a Positive 1st Response in everything and prompting team members, e.g., ‘How might we use a Glad > Sure > Sorry (MGI’s powerful complaints tool) to respond to that complaint?’ – further embedding it into the everyday working culture.

In annual staff reviews everyone is asked to comment on how they believe they are demonstrating the Think Shirley Toolkit as part of their Gold Standard Behaviours, including managers at every level.

Think Shirley is also embedded within the company’s **Recruitment** – internal candidates are specifically asked how well they think they demonstrate the Think Shirley Toolkit, and external candidates respond to a set of questions that draws out certain methodologies relating to the MGI Toolkit, such as a positive mindset and where they’re more inclined to be with their emotions and behaviours in various situations.

The team is also developing some **short video-based workshops, Golden Nuggets**, for Team Meetings where colleagues will play out various scenarios on screen to further embed the training in a lively, fun and memorable way.

Increased employee engagement

The continuous focus on excelling in using Think Shirley tools is reaping positive results, with Golding's **Best Companies Survey** last Autumn increasing from 'Ones to Watch' to a very solid **1 Star – Very Good Organisation** (just six points away from a 2 Star - Outstanding) indicating a significant upswing in employee engagement.

Staff retention and sickness stats show massive improvements, too, with staff turnover down from 24% in early 2022 to 11.56% at end of April 2023 and sickness down from 12.2 days on average to 5.86 days over the same period, suggesting that colleagues are feeling more engaged with the organisation and working together effectively to underpin the values and behaviours everyone is signed up to.

With this solid foundation in place, Golding Homes is in an increasingly strong position to continue to work towards outstanding customer service, a goal that remains at the forefront of its Corporate Plan, and we are delighted to be a part of it.

"I've always said that the MGI training gives you self-coaching skills for life, not just for work. It's a Toolkit for positive mental health. It's about resilience and having a positive, can-do attitude. The Toolkit shows you how to achieve this; it's the ultimate 'how to' guide."

Fiona Deal, Executive Director of People, Digital and Change, Golding Homes



 To find out more about how we can help you to achieve your goals for successful, long-lasting training through our Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit, or to book a chat with us, please contact us.

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