

A case study - Driving culture change and increasing sales income

An organisation with a major retail presence on the High Street invested in a multi-million pound, two year refurbishment programme for its top 400 flagship stores. A request was made for support in up-skilling customer facing personnel. The organisation was willing to invest both substantial funds and time to improve the selling skills of the staff in order to generate 20% increase in annual income from the refurbished stores.

A training needs analysis was conducted with 10 pilot stores of varying sizes and locations. In addition to the requested selling skills, the TNA identified the need for improved leadership skills for the management team in the stores, creation of a team ethos and more in depth learning of operations and procedural knowledge. A proposal was presented to the sponsor outlining 3 options with associated costs. The proposal centred on creating a customer centric culture to support the organisational brand values, aligning behaviour to the values and ensuring the approach to selling remained congruent. This was vital for the organisation in order to maintain its brand reputation whilst balancing the need to generate the required additional income. The sponsor decided to test all 3 options in the 10 pilot stores to identify which option received the most positive reaction from the learners and their line manager's. The 10 pilots were completed in an 8 week timescale and the resulting feedback from attendees resulted in the sponsor deciding on a consistent programme and allocating a budget to support the entire roll-out.

The approach decided upon was a 3 month holistic learning programme with 3 key strands:

- TNA completion for each individual store to identify operational and procedural learning needs and subsequent training plan for implementation. This process started one month prior to the launch date of the new store.
- A 5 day event for the entire store personnel including the management team. This was undertaken the week prior to the refurbished store re-opening. The design of the event centred on how to bring to life the organisational values from day one through the creation of a local vision thus developing leadership skills across the entire team. The design also entailed taking ownership of the customer relationship at all levels which in turn required an improvement in selling skills.
- One of the main "take-aways" from the 5 day event was a team-designed implementation and sustainability plan to ensure the momentum was continued and tangible results obtained.

Kirkpatrick evaluation methodology was designed at 4 levels: learner reaction; observation and assessment in role-play scenarios; pre/post learning comparison of live application; pre/post learning comparison of actual sales made and sales referred. The sponsor was primarily focused on the final measure which was converted to an actual value of income from sales made.

The targets set and subsequent results obtained from the 3 month holistic programme were:

- 20% increase in daily income to be achieved within 12 weeks. Average timescale to actual achievement 6 weeks. Actual increase in income achieved after 12 weeks averaged 29.5%.
- Sustainability of 20% increase in income over 12 month period achieved by 100% of stores.