



Training without frontiers™

Case study: Supporting global effectiveness

Supporting global effectiveness

Laying claim to a heritage stretching back almost 300 years, our client is one of the world's leading insurance groups. With operations in 28 countries and providing insurance products and services to more than 130 countries, the company has a strong legacy of underwriting and claims expertise, providing customers with innovative and high quality financial services solutions.

Yet in a fiercely competitive market nothing stands still. In 2006, following a major restructuring of the Group, as part of its new growth strategy it developed a company-wide improvement programme, fully supported by the main Board.

This fundamental change initiative was designed to create a stronger culture and focus, with nine 'work streams' addressing a broad range of issues - from account planning and performance management to incentive-based remuneration and utilising management information effectively.

We've completed associated training programmes for them in the UK, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, Latin America and Sweden, delivering uniformly impressive results. Barry Hazelwood, Business Director – Operations, Skill4 International explains:

"With our international network of experienced training specialists, the client programme has proved to be unmatched in its ability to provide consistent high-quality training delivered by specialist local trainers and tailored to meet the particular needs of each local market."

Although contracted at a Group level with strong sponsorship, our years of experience in rolling out international projects meant that our consultants knew that local involvement would be vital. Success relied on a number of key elements.

A consultative approach to local implementation

Simply exporting a standard implementation model risks stiff local resistance. Hazelwood continues:

"We worked closely with local management at the outset in order to establish the precise requirements of each region, understand their different cultures, and areas of expertise, to determine the most appropriate method of delivery."

"The programmes implemented in Canada and Latin America in particular demonstrate the flexibility of our approach, in identifying and delivering an effective tailored solution to improve performance in each marketplace."

"We carried out process diagnosis on a country-by-country basis to identify the appropriate implementation model for each and built momentum as we went."

"For example, successes achieved early on in the Brazilian programmes provided strong additional evidentiary support in securing buy-in for the subsequent training activities in Colombia and Chile."

Customised training materials and delivery

Here too, we reflected the realities of each local marketplace. Customisation was tailored to meeting the differing environments from country to country.

Training delivery also differed to suit local requirements. In Canada, for example, the training was delivered to around 40 delegates as a single integrated programme, as part of a major conference. By contrast, in Brazil the training was phased over three months, with 48 delegates taking part in three-day workshops.

Impressive results

The results of this highly flexible and individualised approach have been immediate and substantial. For example, since training took place in Colombia, its team has regularly exceeded target by between 15-32 per cent. In Brazil and Chile too, the more consistent, systematic techniques adopted as a result of the training have also seen substantial sales gains.

The acid test however is in how much business has resulted and here again, the training has not been found wanting. For one representative,

"I can think of at least three large accounts we were recently given the opportunity to quote on, worth around \$750,000 in premiums. We have already written two, worth \$500,000, with the third currently being quoted."

A simple approach

As implementation nears completion, the project is being handed back to the business in each region, though our client's Board is determined to ensure that the impetus for effective change is maintained. As a spokesman says:

"We are extremely proud of what we have achieved over the past two years, in providing the foundation for long-term business improvement,"

"In particular, we have been impressed by the ability to deliver real consistency of concepts and the application of needs-based training group-wide. The strength of this approach has been to deliver consistency in a way that moved the concepts from theory for each person, by tailoring the programme content to meet the diverse requirements of each of our local markets."

"And finally, this corporate commitment has been reinforced by the fact that the training has not been an isolated event, but has been fully integrated within a broader improvement programme."

"The outcome of this holistic approach has been to greatly improve the impact of each 'building block' - including training - so increasing the effectiveness of what is an outstanding improvement initiative."



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