

Call Centre Sales Managers learn new skills to motivate their teams at BT Business Sales



Sales Managers desperately need training and support that is relevant, practical and easy for them to adapt to their fast-paced working environment. One of the key challenges for BT Sales Managers was freeing up more time to motivate their Advisors. Hitting targets being the norm; it was always extremely difficult to take a step back and find time to prepare and the run regular 'meaningful' team meetings and 1-2-1 sessions.

In June 2007, they commenced an eight-month Sales Manager's Leadership Development Programme (SMLP) for 60 of their Call Centre Sales Team Managers.

"Our 'modular' approach was designed to be very practical and highly interactive allowing the Managers to take away the tools and techniques that were 'right' for them and then provide feedback on their success on the next Module" explained Valerie Heritage from The Communication Challenge and Jane Box from Interactive People Development.

The 8 month programme contained the following modules:

1. leadershipindex360© appraisal – feedback, personal development and action plans
2. Empowering beliefs for inspirational sales leadership
3. Coaching high performance sales teams
4. Influencing through assertiveness
5. Making change work
6. Inspiring audiences
7. leadershipindex360© appraisal - feedback, personal development and business improvement plans to measure progress and maintain momentum

"What I really liked about this programme was that I was treated as a professional manager; on some courses you feel you are just being talked at", explained Gareth Stokes, Sales Manager at Skelmersdale.

The Modules were based around three critical factors:

- 1. Measuring real behaviour; providing accurate, personal feedback as a basis for developing identifiable strengths and development areas.**

"This 360 appraisal is by far the best feedback I have ever had; it is accurate, relevant and honest from the people I work with every day". Kathy Perkins, Sales Coach at Leicester

"I am committed to developing our people and have engaged index360© to provide a more structured approach for individuals to discover for themselves their own Personal Development needs. The feedback has been extremely positive; the anecdotal evidence is indicating that this has made a great difference to the way Sales Managers lead their teams and I am sure the end result will deliver against our business objectives", said Alan Aspey, Principal Consultant for L&D – BT Business at the mid-point of the programme.

2. Using 'expert' business professionals, who stayed with the same group throughout, to enhance rapport, continuity and apply the theory to 'real-life' situations.

"John put it into 'real' terms, he understands our business. In the past we have had trainers who didn't and it really makes a difference to what we get out of it". We covered different leadership styles and approaches and looked at the bigger picture with group discussions which was excellent". Ranjit Garcha, Centre Manager at Leicester

3. Improving business performance by developing bespoke key leadership modules that would meet the needs of the business and the individual managers.

"It was much more 'hands-on' and different from previous training; it took a much broader view of the role of a manager. Over six months we increased our performance by 10% overall". Val Maples, Sales Manager at Sheffield

Naz Haque, First Line Manager at Sheffield Call Centre, responsible for a team of fourteen people explained how it gave him the courage to do something different. *"It has been brilliant, I took so much away that I have been able to use with my team. You go away on courses and at the end close your book and come back to work and carry on as before – this was different – it gave me the tools and more importantly the courage to do something different".*

Well this all sounds good but what about the team – are they seeing the benefits. *"Since Naz has been on the programme he is much more involved with the team, making work more fun, coming up with more incentives. Working on the values brought the team together and was very motivational. The 'circle of influence' has given us a structure - we are much more upbeat",* says one Advisor.

Another Advisor comments, *"I have been with BT for ten years and Naz is one of the better Managers but since the programme he has become much more structured and focused. Using the 'circle of influence' has really stopped us going on about things that are out of our control, now we discuss together and concentrate on the day to day issues whilst Naz will take things away and do something about them. Working on our values together brought us close, we always did have a good team ethos but now we are even more upbeat and positive".*

Ranjit Garcha, Centre Manager at Leicester was really impressed with the practical nature of the programme, *"We covered different leadership styles and approaches and looked at the bigger picture with group discussions which was excellent. It was good to be able to share best practice with colleagues from other Call Centres. I particularly found the coaching elements helpful; being less directive rather than instinctively giving the answers is always a challenge".*

Gareth Stokes, Manager at Skelmersdale explains how the results of his 360 Appraisal really motivated him to strive to improve further. *"The 360 appraisal at the start was really useful, it provided me with good feedback; it gave me a nice little lift. I am very self-critical and the feedback was telling me that I was better than I thought. It gave me much more confidence and a lot more to think about and question what I do. I started to enjoy it. Now I know I am doing a good job, so I just carry on and give it my all. The second time around my scores were even better, I was really motivated to continue to improve.*

The feedback I am getting from my team is really positive and with a 15% increase overall in our results over the last quarter this new way of working has paid off!"

Kathy Perkins a Coach at Leicester Contact Centre was really impressed with the accuracy of the 360 feedback.

"Combining the 360 with workshops is really good as you can focus on your needs as opposed to the 'sheep-dip' approach we have experienced in the past which is not always relevant and there is no natural follow up.

Now I am far more proactive in asking for feedback than I was prior to the leadershipindex360© training”.

Ingrid Hemington, Sales Manager at Canterbury explains how the Programme has resulted in the Managers now working much more as a team to the benefit of the Centre. *“The 360 appraisal feedback from my colleagues was really valuable. Before we worked very much in isolation but the 360 has brought us much closer together, we compared our results and discussed how we could improve. We now focus on one goal rather than before when we just looked at our own team. We have instigated weekly meetings, this never happened before.*

The SMLP has reinforced my belief that rather than focusing on just targets we need to work on the attitude and behaviours of our Advisors”.

Val Maples, Sales Manager at Sheffield shared with us how the programme has made her team ‘Top Performers’. *“This has been the best training I have had so far with BT. I came away from each module really motivated and eager to try out new ways of managing my team.*

It showed me a totally different way of working. Rather than focusing on numbers and products it was all about looking at the people in my team as individuals.

In six months my team is now the top performing team in Sheffield, previously we were around the middle, increasing our performance by 10% overall. I have no doubt in my mind that this has been a direct result of the SMLP”.

Sarah Moore, Sales Manager at Skelmersdale explains how the Programme inspired confidence to influence her performance.

“I found the whole SMLP really inspiring, it showed me a whole new way of working and I feel much more in control and confident in my ability to influence the performance of my team.

I am now more structured and focused in my approach and as a result have gained 25% more time to coach my team. I also spend 50% less time preparing for team meetings”.

Summary

Overall the leadershipindex360© appraisal results are looking good with increases across the board for the 49 managers who repeated the leadershipindex360© questionnaire twice, showing an overall percentage increase of 1.65% from a very healthy starting benchmark of 5.47 out of a possible 7.

Overall	June 07	Feb 08	% change
ALL QUESTIONS	5.47	5.56	+1.65%
Strategy and Priorities	5.29	5.47	+3.40%
Behaviour and Style	5.39	5.45	+1.11%
Originality and Inspiration	5.55	5.59	+0.72%
Values and Teamwork	5.68	5.73	+0.88%

The Strategy and Priorities Section shows the greatest improvements.

Strategy and Priorities	June 07	Feb 08	% change
Sets a clear strategic direction	5.35	5.51	+2.99%
Focuses on developing and evolving strategy	5.24	5.41	+3.24%
Ensures effort is focused on priorities	5.71	5.74	+0.53%
Takes a long-term perspective	5.18	5.35	+3.28%
Ensures decisions are consistent with the vision for the future	5.45	5.58	+2.39%
Continually explains the reason for change	5.33	5.49	+3.00%
Holds regular meetings to review priorities	4.69	5.22	+11.30%
Balances short-term priorities against long-term plans	5.28	5.39	+2.08%

“Before with my team it was all about questioning the facts and figures; now we talk about why, what we can do to change, what we can do differently. It is very much focused on motivating them as individuals and as a team”. Sarah Moore, Sales Manager at Skelmersdale.

Natalie Read, Head of Recruitment Training & Development sums up the programme.

“We challenged Valerie and Jane to design an inspirational and forward focused development programme for our management team. They were not only imaginative and pro-active but also really engaged all managers at each event to create a trusting and professional environment. This has now resulted in desired increases in key areas of leadership and behaviours, as well as performance.

The use of the index360© questionnaire at the start was an essential element along with objective setting and clear measurement allowing us to understand the starting point for the programme. Again at the end we repeated the index360© questionnaire process to ensure changes in behaviour and leadership were recognised by the management team, their direct reports and colleagues. This also provided us with valuable supporting evidence for the overall performance measures at the end of the programme”.



Employee Engagement Solutions



w: www.index360.com e: val@communicationchallenge.co.uk t: +441162596896