

DNA case study

Royal Mail Group plc

In this case study we explore the major challenges faced by Royal Mail Group plc and how implementation of the Development Needs Analysis (DNA) tool led to improved internal processes for identifying and closing skills gaps in the marketing workforce.

The client

In 2001 Royal Mail Group plc became a public limited company wholly owned by the Government. Since then the organisation has undergone a huge transformation, turning losses of more than £1 million a day into a £537 million profit from operations in 2004-05 and delivering some of the best service quality on record. Royal Mail employs around 193,000 people in the UK, (almost 1% of the working population) serving 24 million customers each week through a network of some 12,000 Post Office branches.

Royal Mail's vision is to be demonstrably the best and most trusted postal services company in the world. Achieving this depends on having the capability to meet future challenges, getting the best out of their leading brands and setting the right strategic direction.

Key issues

In 2006 Royal Mail faced a new challenge – the introduction of full competition in the UK mail market. To meet a long term vision of world-class performance, and to compete with new entrants to the market, Royal Mail recognised the need to restructure and invest in their people. There was however, no formal system in place to audit the marketing specific skills, capabilities and learning needs of their marketers.

Solution

Having researched a number of potential solutions, DNA – The Chartered Institute of Marketing's Development Needs Analysis tool – was chosen above an American based team analytics system, primarily because it was more flexible for Royal Mail's workforce structure and was based on professional industry standards.

DNA was used for all levels of Royal Mail's marketing products team and, because individual and team benefits were clearly communicated internally, buy-in was high. The system was easy to use which meant quick and simple implementation. Using a web-based platform allowed the online scenarios to be completed at different sittings and progress was easily monitored centrally by Human Resources.

Where previously there was only a soft knowledge of skills and development needs, now Human Resources could report on hard data and facts. Development themes were identified and visual outputs, such as graphs and pie charts, were given to line managers, opening the dialogue for discussion of training needs with their teams.

Results

The DNA tool highlighted individual training requirements around four development themes. These training needs are being met through tailored and customised training for groups of individuals, ensuring the training is specific to Royal Mail's industry, market conditions and learning requirements.

DNA helped identify areas of strength within their teams. Internal coaches and role models were identified who could share knowledge and mentor others.

Royal Mail is now considering a rollout of the DNA tool to its sales teams and using DNA to evaluate the return on investment from its marketing team development programmes.

