

Most *innovative deployment* of *HR technology*

Winner *JPI Media*

Selling advertising for print publications is a fiercely competitive and declining market, so JPI Media decided it needed to transform its commercial function by developing skillsets.

The business's previous approach to monitoring sales calls and visits was highly subjective, too 'lumpy' and had become a tick-box exercise that had little impact. It was a very manual, paper-driven process and there was no easy method to produce reports that could be used for feedback.

The business needed to introduce a motivating approach and system to galvanise employees and provide opportunities to develop. Additionally, it wanted to help salespeople understand and recognise best practice conversations. Coaching was key to enabling this, but there wasn't a coaching culture and many managers thought they were coaching already.

JPI Media got in touch with sales consultant and coach Russell Ward, and with his help defined best practice skills, behaviours and mindset attributes; filmed and animated bite-sized videos that

matched each major attribute; wrote communications material about the forthcoming programme; customised learning and development technology from Meta Capability; refined the brand (Sales Excellence is the overarching programme brand and Development Insights is the technology platform); and trained people on how to use Development Insights to observe their staff on live calls or meetings and how to best use that for coaching purposes.

After several months of preparation it launched the Sales Excellence programme in January 2018 to the commercial directors and commercial managers, starting with the Development Insights technology. The first stage was to win hearts and minds. The commercial leadership needed to be committed to the approach, understand the psychology of the methodology and technology, and make time in their busy daily agendas.

JPI Media ran a two-day course on the psychology of the approach and technology, how to use it and interpret the resulting data for feedback and coaching, plus how and when to coach. Everyone then self-assessed their capability. The commercial directors were observed in meetings and coaching sessions, given feedback on their capability compared to their personal assessment, then received coaching. The commercial directors then repeated the above with their sales managers and coached them in a trickle-down approach. Key to the programme's success has been how the commercial leadership has been engaged and driving it.

Observing telesales staff on live calls was fairly straightforward as they are office-based and a captive audience. The field sales teams posed more of a challenge. To complete observations quickly and generate

coaching data, the business utilised role play with actors. The sales managers observed the meetings using the Development Insights technology and either the salesperson did what is defined as best practice in the platform or not.

JPI Media also filmed and animated more than 300 videos. Where someone has development opportunities, as highlighted by their manager, an algorithm works out the most important videos that each individual should watch. This creates a personal learning journey and enables on-the-go learning.

Salespeople are able to see how they compare to their immediate team, the average of everyone in the same role, and also contrast their manager's view with their own self-assessment. The L&D team can now see where the whole organisation might need additional development in very specific areas, and target sessions for the individual or identify team needs.

Results so far are good. Throughout 2018, revenue per head improved in telesales by 12% and in field sales by 8%. Average order value increased by 24% in telesales and 13% in field sales. Attrition in telesales has reduced by 23%.



Shortlisted

American Tire Distributors

Church of England

John Lewis Partnership

Pizza Hut

Siemens

The AA

Turkish Economy Bank

Wiltshire Council