

Prolearn Case Study

Making people better at selling, giving customer service and managing others



Stamping a mark in financial services

Company Background

With around 16,000 branches across the UK, the Post Office® is the largest retailer in Europe. The Post Office® serves 29.2 million customers every week, with a permanent staff of approximately 13,500 employees. An additional 67,000 people deliver Post Office® services, employed by franchise partners such as multiple and independent retailers.

The Challenge

Research showed that the Post Office® is one of the UK's most trusted brands. The survey revealed that 70% of respondents felt that customer-service levels at the Post Office® were ahead of organisations such as Tesco and BT, while 88% felt that compared to other institutions, the Post Office® was an important part of the local community.

In order to deepen its relationship with its unique client-base and also secure a viable commercial future, the Post Office® under Chief Executive David Mills set out to gain just one extra penny from each of the 42 million customer visits every week – and identified expanding into the financial services market as the way to achieve that.



Prosell

People • Performance • Improvement



Solution

To help implement this strategy, the Post Office® chose **Prosell** as its strategic training and performance-improvement partner, and in particular used **Prosell's 'Prolearn'** service to help develop and implement the people strategy and tactics to achieve their goal.

Prosell's heritage of successfully working with blue-chip organisations in sales and service environments, made it the natural choice for an organisation with more outlets than all the UK's banks and building societies combined. Together, the Post Office® and **Prosell** developed the (+1) sales and marketing programme to help staff deliver that one extra penny per transaction.

Implementation

Prosell knew that a "hard sell" approach would not appeal to the Post Office's customer base nor be suitable for the counter staff, therefore a 'conversational-selling' model was introduced that built upon the excellent standard of customer service already in place.

9,000 counter staff in the (+1) programme were trained in conversational selling techniques. Workshops were used to introduce the products and their benefits, helping employees role-play situations they would encounter on the job. Sessions identified the aspects of selling that work best for the Post Office® and ways of instilling these qualities into the company's new strategic direction.

Senior management buy-in was crucial. The top 70 executives from across the organisation attended a session while those in the wider Post Office® network were reached via bespoke sales training videos, self-learning CDs, financial product information sheets and the (+1) Selling Guide.

A further round of workshops for 5,000 more employees is currently underway along with support tools for line managers and a '**Pronet**' solution for the entire network to propagate the selling models effectively.

To find out more about **Prosell**, please contact us on **+61 (0) 2 9906 5755** for Australia and **+ 44 (0) 870 855 3000** for the United Kingdom or visit **www.prosell.com**

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Results

An initial test phase compared the sales performance of 100 Post Office® branches taking part in the (+1) development programme, against a pool of 100 which did not.

Within three months, the branches participating in the programme out-performed the control group by **5%** - and sale values had risen by **16.7%**. What's more, **95%** of workshop attendees agreed that the sales coaching programme provided a 'positive experience'.

The hands-on management style which the coaching programme has encouraged is also thought to have contributed to the increased number of employees who say they are 'enjoying their role' from **63%** to **71%** in the space of a year.

Learning Points

The (+1) people development programme has instilled a whole new way of doing things at the Post Office®, comments **Jonathan Hewett, Head of Sales** at Post Office® Ltd. "It has helped smooth the transition into financial services, and was a major part of our preparations for the launch of our personal loan, the first Post Office® branded financial service product."

An underlying message – "It's not the knowing, it's the doing" – is implicit within the Post Office® now. **Jonathan Hewett** comments: "This has enabled us to turn this philosophy into practice, by communicating to our front line colleagues what's being done to support them in delivering increased sales. By gaining valuable input from the bottom up it has ensured our 16,000 outlets have bought into our vision, excelling in the provision of financial products."

