



INFORMATION

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Bringing competency-based appraisals to life in company culture for optimum results

The strength and effectiveness of competency-based appraisals - assessing behaviours as well as performance targets - can make a remarkable contribution to people development and management. But companies wanting to gain the most out of this approach take the wise strategic route of ensuring that over time the concept and the process are working together for optimal results.

This was the route taken by the IT division at Société Générale Corporate and Investment Banking in the UK, with the help of respected people development and training specialists Rhema Group. The task was to “bring competencies to life” so that they became part of the culture of the IT division in which the new thinking and processes had been introduced.

Rhema had devised and delivered initial tailored training when last year Société Générale Corporate and Investment Banking introduced the competencies for its IT managers and staff in London.. A framework of competencies was defined under the categories of Personal Effectiveness, Team Effectiveness and Result Expectation. These included adaptability, assertiveness, self-management, developing and leading others, listening and influencing, and client focus.

Introduction of competencies as the basis for job descriptions required a matching approach to performance appraisals via competency-based interviews. Rhema trained the managers in the new interview skills needed to elicit evidence that staff behaviours are consistent with the competencies of each role.

Follow-up internal research revealed a need to refine processes and skills, particularly in terms of addressing varying levels of the understanding of competencies among staff which were the result of differences in style and content of the briefings they received.

Rhema was asked to provide consultancy to address this. “Our task was effectively to bring competencies to life and integrate this approach into the corporate culture,” says Rhema Director William Burton. His approach was to deliver this consultancy in three areas.

- Communication – via initial e-mails to all staff, with messages specific to the role of each, listing the defined competencies of that role and explaining these using a reference document. Each person was also invited to attend a more detailed briefing and Q&A session.
- Formal Briefing Session for all staff on the rationale behind the introduction of competencies, the benefits to themselves, the IT department and the organisation as a whole, the process and their roles and responsibilities in it – followed by a question and answer session with the project sponsor.
- Training for managers, including videoed role plays of interviews and feedback.

“We were very happy to be brought back by Société Générale Corporate and Investment Banking on such an interesting and important project, and one which is of potential interest at a corporate level,” says Burton. “We were able to assist the IT department through the various stages of this process to ensure complete buy-in from managers and staff alike, leading to consistency of approach in an effective Performance Appraisal System which fully integrated into their culture.”

The end result of the project was that all staff understood the competency framework, the rationale behind the introduction of competencies and the benefits to themselves. This was vital to ensure the buy-in from the staff.

In addition, all managers were trained in how to manage individuals using the new competencies. This included developing their skills in defining behavioural evidence for each competency, the skills of drawing out behavioural evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) and the need for establishing a consistent approach to performance management.

Burton concludes: “Feedback from HR was very positive and managers are currently conducting staff appraisals using the new competencies.”

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Notes to Editors

The Rhema Group www.rhemagroup.com is a highly respected and well-established UK human resource development company which also operates globally. Founded in 1985 by MD Jeremy Francis, Rhema (a name derived from the Greek for *inspired word*) has won a solid reputation for innovation, quality and reliability of delivery of people development and performance.

Focusing on Talent Development, Management Development, Performance Management, Sales Training and Skills Development, Rhema provides on a 24/7 basis customised and blended solutions involving business consultancy, assessment/psychometrics, training, coaching, software and E-learning (via internet and client intranets).

Rhema Group includes a roster of talented and experienced UK consultants, and through 15 international partners of best practitioner status in Europe, USA, South Africa, Australia and S.E. Asia, Rhema delivers proprietary products and services globally in a variety of languages – in particular to multinationals looking for high quality, customised and consistent international roll-out of centrally mandated people development programmes and assessments. Clients include Microsoft, Société Générale, Reed Business Information, BOC Group, International Financial Data Systems, Institution of Civil Engineers and leading Dutch vendor lease organisation De Lage Landen.

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