

Bringing the team together

Mission Excellence develops leadership and teamwork



Coutts & Co, the private banking arm of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, provides private banking and wealth management services for clients worldwide. In 2007 Mission Excellence was commissioned to deliver a series of team development interventions for the Investment Operations area.

Subsequently, Mission Excellence was invited to contribute to a programme that was being run across the Private Banking teams to support the transition to a new business model.

The Original Brief

Investment Operations is a centre of excellence for investment administration and securities settlement, servicing a number of brands within the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, including Coutts. With offices in Bristol, Crawley and London, the management of these teams has recently become centralised with one Executive Manager overseeing the entire operation. Following this change, Mission Excellence was invited to deliver a series of high impact seminars to help leverage the collective strength and experience across the three locations and engage personnel in the 'One Team' concept.

The Challenges

Mission Excellence faced a number of challenges, the main one of which was that the three sites had previously worked semi-autonomously, each with their own 'culture'. Furthermore, the employees were very diverse in age, seniority and gender which meant there were various levels of career ambition and life experience amongst the group; how can you ensure that the eager youngster profits from, and contributes to, the event as much as a part-time worker who has already been employed in the company for many years? And, how do you actively encourage every delegate to pursue the corporate aim of 'Unlocking Excellence'?

The Solution

A bespoke one-day team development programme was designed and delivered four times to mixed audiences from across all three locations. Each seminar combined practical insights into team performance based on the first-hand experience of Mission Excellence facilitators as fighter pilots, with interactive group exercises to bring the learning to life.

An opening presentation supported by dramatic high resolution photo imagery and video footage, concentrated on the core decisive factors in intra- and inter-team performance, in particular multi-site matrix team work. Key issues included personal behaviours, alignment of effort and the fighter pilot's mission planning cycle. Delegates were then asked to apply the concepts in a humanitarian aid mission planning exercise, working as mixed teams under the supervision of the Mission Excellence experts.

The programme was aligned with, and built upon, a previous internal programme, 'Unlocking Excellence', all designed to ultimately support the organisation's mission to deliver unsurpassed world class service to their clients.

At the end of each day the Mission Excellence team jointly facilitated a discussion group with the head of the Investment Operations team to help delegates contextualise learning with respect to their own working environments.

“ The results of our recent employee survey showed significant improvements in all categories and I have no doubt that Mission Excellence was an important contributor to this success ”

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The Verdict

The one-day intervention exceeded expectations and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Common themes the delegates say they took away included clarity in common purpose, collective ownership of client service, and an understanding of the power of effective teamwork. When asked to review the interventions some months later, Stuart Newey, Head of Investment Operations, commented:

"The events were a huge success, with everyone taking away messages to help them in their work and personal life. The results of our recent employee survey showed significant improvements in all categories and I have no doubt that Mission Excellence was an important contributor to this success."

Supporting Transition

Following on from the success of the interventions with Investment Operations, Mission Excellence was asked to support the Private Banking community in its transition to a new business model incorporating shared objectives and financial targets. The aim of the transition was for Coutts to leverage collective expertise for maximum client benefit and once again raise the service bar in the private banking marketplace.

This transition required a new focus on teamwork and leadership skills and as always Coutts approached the issues therein with a professional focus and rigour, rolling out a development programme across the whole of the Private Banking community.

Mission Excellence supported the programme in two ways:

- Through a series of leadership presentations to Client Partners in both the UK and Middle East, focusing on core leadership values and behaviours
- And through team development seminars for all private banking teams

In all 12 interventions were delivered for a total of over 600 delegates in the UK and UAE, in less than one month. Following completion, Nick Pollard, Managing Director UK & International Private Banking, commented:

"Feedback was excellent...memorable tailored learning was delivered that will help our people embed the new structure more quickly."

About Mission Excellence

Mission Excellence is an organisational performance consultancy focused on improving clients' ability to execute .

Consultants are predominantly former military fighter pilots including several Red Arrows. Areas of intervention include advanced planning and problem solving, team and leadership development, teamwork in high-risk environments, and achieving continuous improvement, all delivered through consultancy, training programmes, and high-impact interventions for conferences and management meetings.

Clients include 3M, Accenture, BP, GSK, Henley Management College, IBM, Lockheed Martin, Procter & Gamble, Royal Bank of Scotland and UK Sport.

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