

DELIVERING THE GOODS FOR DRS

THE BACKGROUND

When Direct Rail Services (DRS) looked to implement a company restructure across its business, its operations department took the opportunity to audit the skills held by a newly formed team of managers brought about by the changes.

Ensuring the development of a strong team ethic was felt to be key to the new team's success. This case study looks at how Oakridge worked with DRS to create a programme that has brought positive and speedy improvements to this management team.

DRS is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Established in 1995 as a lynch pin supplier of transport and associated services to the nuclear industry, today DRS is a dynamic business with a £45 million turnover. The company has extended its service offering into other rail sectors and now employs more than 300 staff nationwide.

DRS embarked upon a company reorganisation across all departments. Within its operations department a new manager level was created with many of the team themselves new to management roles with no previous experience.

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DRS wanted to develop a proactive group and their management skills needed to develop fast. At the same time the new group of employees needed to develop a strong team ethic and a grasp of working the 'DRS way'.

Oakridge is a Nuclear Employer Nominated Provider of The National Skills Academy for Nuclear and takes an active role in the creation, development and promotion of world class skills and career pathway to support a sustainable future for the UK Nuclear Industry. Through this work, Oakridge was introduced to DRS and was provided with an insight into the new department and expectations of DRS.

Oakridge worked with DRS to develop a bespoke team development programme, for a newly formed group of senior managers, scoping out expectations using Q&As to gain a clearer understanding into the background of each of the managers to ensure the programme would be positioned correctly to those attending.

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THE APPROACH

The programme was a two day delivery for managers with a follow-up third day. The timescale for the delivery was key as DRS wanted the programme to commence within weeks of the company reorganisation taking affect. Oakridge met this requirement with the first two day workshop.

The programme itself looked at:

- **Management v leadership** - identifying what a great manager does, outlining the difference between management and leadership and looked at what the expectations can be on managers
- **Leadership styles** - with an insight into the Blanchard Situations Leadership Model and the teams' own individual leadership styles
- **Stakeholder mapping** - who they are, which relationships are strong and which need attention
- **Expectations Exchange** - using exercises to understand more about what we expect of each other, our managers, teams, stakeholders and their expectations
- **Team vision** - developing an inspiring vision and being clear about what success will look and feel like with outcomes and priorities for the next six months
- **Communication and behaviour** - how our communication and behaviour can affect others, as well as our own credibility and ability to influence as leaders

- **Motivation and the Manager** - what motivates others and how this can be used
- **Coaching as a leadership style** - and the difference between directive and non-directive coaching and mentoring
- **Managing ourselves** - looking at the Impact Pyramid and how we spend our time at work
- **Identifying** - a range of time management and prioritisation techniques
- **Influencing** - tools and techniques for influencing different stakeholders and for managing upwards.

Oakridge senior consultant Robbie Lightfoot, who developed and delivered the programme to the team, said:

"It was excellent to see how the group quickly embraced learning from the programme and then put it into practice between the sessions with some great results."



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THE RESULTS

Although no formal measurement criteria were in place the results could quickly be seen by those attending the programme and senior managers to whom delegates reported.

The team was, within days, more proactive and able to manage issues rather than being led. The team quickly began to adopt DRS inter-department management requirements and changes were witnessed almost immediately – in day-to-day working and in formal presentations.

The training has also brought about significant benefits to the new team in terms of how they are operating with each other but also their interactions and influence with other stakeholders across the organisation.

Dougie Hill, head of operations at DRS said:

“Oakridge really put in the ground work and invested time in gaining a good understanding of our objectives and needs. I believe this pre-work gave a true understanding of our requirement. What resulted was a programme that not only met our brief but within days took a group of individuals and turned them into a team. Oakridge responded quickly to our requests and ensured this was a trouble free delivery. Our questions were answered and problems solved.”

