

Learning & development

Upskill your team

Introduction

COVID-19 is set to re-invent retailing as the business model adapts to what is likely to be an increasingly omnichannel model and one where 'trust-building' will be even more crucial.

Prior to the ongoing crisis, organisations all over the globe have pointed to the availability of the right skills within their businesses as one of their biggest challenges; digital, data or soft skills in the world's technological revolution all come easily to mind. As the UK navigates through a new 'normal', one where social distancing is helping drive greater digital engagement, upskilling business-wide is likely to be a business critical initiative.

While it is the inevitable question of investing in upskilling while at the same time trying to reduce costs, there are many ways to leverage a broad range of resources to develop content and deliver training and many of these will be online.

Tip 1 - Develop 'soft skills'

Soft skills are that combination of people, social and communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes and social/emotional intelligence. In great sales people, it is these skills that enable sales people to connect to the customer and make it easy for the customer to buy from them. This sales philosophy is very different to the hard-nosed 'push' sales approach and is in-tune with today's well-informed and regulatorily protected car buyer.

Face-to-face, over the phone and even virtually through digital media, the soft skill set of your people is paramount. Even without a Learning and Development team at your fingertips - there are some very easy tips and tools you could introduce which will not only help you assess your employers capability but can also help them identify areas of improvement and set an action plan to progress against.



Conduct a SWOT analysis

This is a way for individuals/teams or even organisations to assess their 'current reality' and - identify their soft skill strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Often used for businesses, it can equally apply to people as the following example illustrates:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written communication ➤ Body language - always told I am approachable ➤ Great telephone manner - always receive strong customer feedback | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presenting skills ➤ Active listening |
| <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written Communication - Opportunity to help with the online copy, social media posts and email dialogue with customers | <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Active Listening - Engagement with customers during face-to-face interactions will suffer if I am unable to demonstrate I am actively listening to their wants and needs. My sales could be impacted as a result of this. ➤ Presentation Skills - My professional ability to convey information or to guarantee a sale will be impacted if my confidence and ability to capture the room and share financial information does not improve. ➤ Tendency to 'Always Be Closing' which means I miss out on listening to other clues from the customer on how I can serve their needs better. |

In addition, you could provide them with a list of the soft skills you feel are most important to you and your business and ask them to place them in the above SWOT table accordingly. Below provides you with a comprehensive list of soft skills you could ask your staff to assess against:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Communication - written | Interpersonal skills (empathy, patience) easy to buy from | |
| Communication - oral | Work ethic | Decision-making |
| Adaptability | Conflict resolution | Time management |
| Problem Solving | Leadership | Public speaking |
| Creativity | Active listening skills | Teamwork |

Resources:

YouTube promote a vast array of Soft Skill videos, all aimed at being quick, bitesize and not too time consuming:

- 👉 **Strengthening Soft Skills** – Ted Talk – Andy Wible
- 👉 **Dr Brene Brown** – Communication and Leadership – TedTalk
- 👉 **What skills lead to success?** Ted Talk – Paula Golden
- 👉 **Personal SWOT Analysis** – Personal Development – Kreative Leadership

LinkedIn is also a great way of accessing learning resources.

Tip 2 – Coaching and feedback

Team coaching and feedback is a great way of tapping into free development/training. What better way than being able to hear first-hand from those that know you best – ways in which you could better perform as well as a reminder of all the things you do so well.

Another coaching resource can come from the businesses you work with; don't be afraid to ask! Used correctly, coaching and feedback can add real value to a person's self-awareness, performance and career progression.

Below are a list of indicative 'open' coaching questions that can be used with the focus on the current challenge or maybe a performance issue. Use the questions which best apply coaching as appropriate against the GROW model (see below):

What do you want to achieve?

What is important to you right now?

What would you like to get from the next 30 minutes?

What areas do you want to work on?

What do you want to achieve as a result of this session?

What will make you feel this time has been well spent?

Where are you now in relation to your goal?

On a scale of 1 -10 where are you?

What has contributed to your success so far?

What skills/knowledge/ attributes do you have?

What progress have you made so far?

What is working well right now?

What is required of you?

What are your options?

How have you tackled this/ a similar situation before?

What could you do differently?

Who do you know who has encountered a similar situation?

Give me 5 options

If anything was possible what would you do?

What else?

Which options work best for you?

What one small step are you going to take now?

What actions will you take?

When are you going to start?

Who will help you?

How will you know you have been successful?

How will you ensure that you do it?

On a scale of 1 -10 how committed /motivated are you to doing it?

The GROW model is a great way of setting an action against a specific challenge / problem. It is a coaching framework used in conversations, meetings and everyday leadership to unlock potential and possibilities.

G-oals **R**-eality **O**-ptions **W**-ill

With a few powerful coaching questions, a leader or coach can quickly raise awareness and responsibility in each area:

G: goals and aspirations

R: current situation, internal and external obstacles

O: possibilities, strengths and resources

W: actions and accountability

The critical aspect is goal-setting, establish a goal that is not just SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound) but which is inspiring and challenging.

Principles of coaching:

There are also the following points to consider when approaching a coaching conversation.

- Coaching is about creating an environment of empowerment
- It's about making the 'coachee' really think and challenge themselves
- Coaching creates a situation whereby people see things differently and start to think outside of the box – can drive creativity
- As a coach you don't need all of the answers – just ask questions to help the person being coached to really think and consider all the possible outcomes
- Coaching is there to help people see 'failure' as a learning opportunity – help your employees to feel comfortable in taking a risk or making a mistake
- It can help build relationships which are a key factor in Sales!



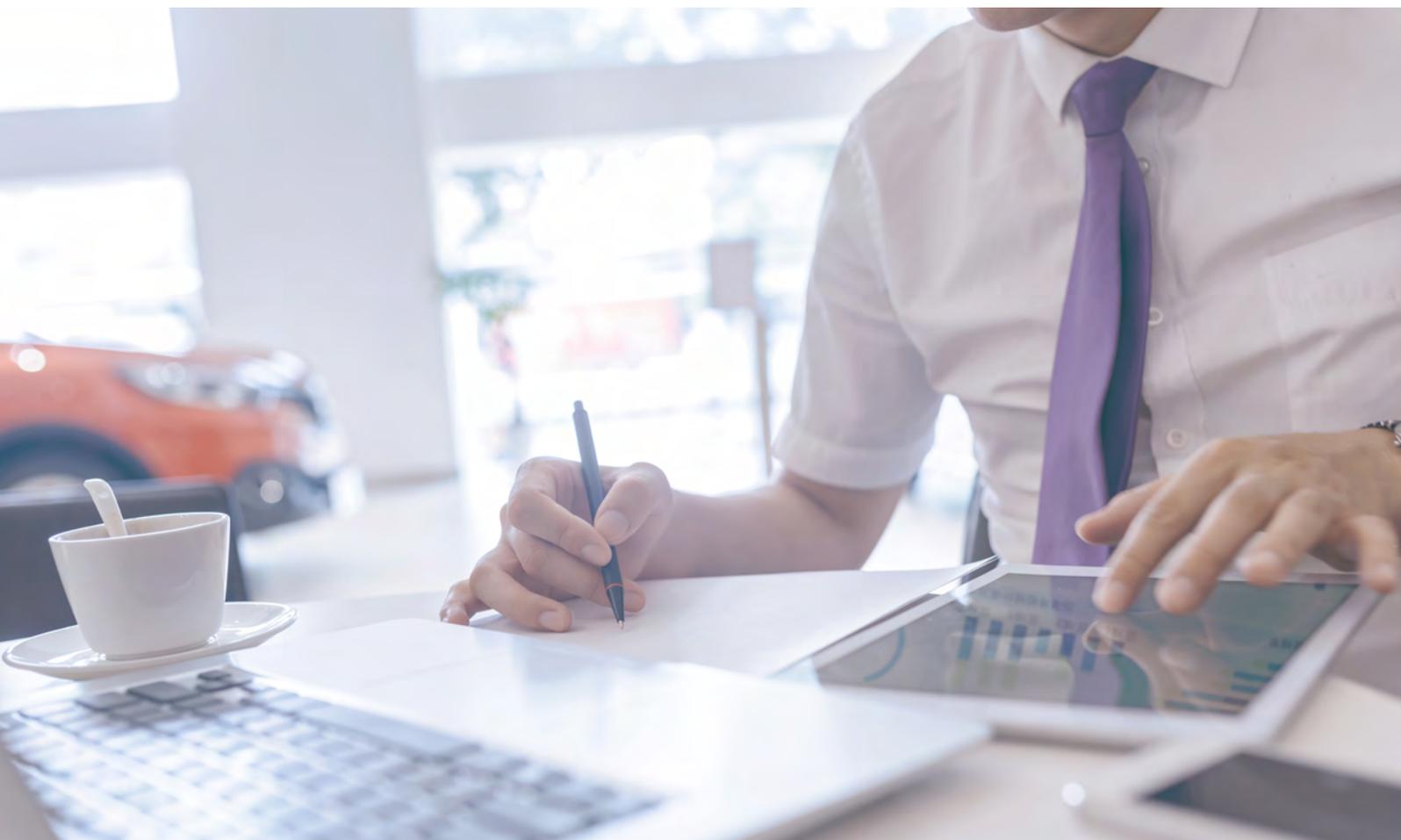
Feedback

Providing effective feedback offers great benefits. Many times, we lose sight of how impactful those benefits could be. Here are some of the benefits, when feedback is delivered effectively:

- 👉 **Improved performance**
- 👉 **Creates a pipeline for professional and personal growth**
- 👉 **Improves retention of staff**
- 👉 **Promotes employee loyalty**
- 👉 **Increased Sales**

Resources

- 👉 **Leading and Coaching** - TedTalk - Mark Smith
- 👉 **Building your Inner Coach** - TedTalk - Brett Ledbetter
- 👉 **Video 19: The GROW Coaching Model** - Anthony Shave - YouTube
- 👉 **Coaching and Grow Model** - Michael Heath - YouTube
- 👉 <https://cambridge-leadership.com/adaptive-leadership/>
- 👉 <https://situational.com/situational-leadership/>



Tip 3 - Performance management

Performance management involves measuring, reporting and managing progress - from the individuals who work for a company, right up to the organisation as a whole - with the aim of improving performance. Examples of performance management processes or tools include performance appraisals, key performance indicators (KPIs) and management dashboards. Essentially, performance management is what organisations do to become more successful and stay ahead of their competitors.

Within an organisation, it is the people in any business who are the greatest creators of value. To make the most of this valuable and costly resource, high quality performance management is critical for an organisation's success.

Team members need to understand what's expected of them and to achieve their goals, they must be managed so that they're motivated, have the necessary skills, resources and support, and are accountable. This is the role of performance management.

Step 1

Business leaders must develop performance management skills. Today's working population increasingly expect to be led professionally and developed continuously. Performance management is as much about development as it is about KPIs! Performance management is a continuous cycle.

Key tools and processes that are commonly used to manage people performance include: appraisals, reward and recognition systems, personal development plans, performance targets, and performance review meetings. To this must be added recruitment, development and coaching.

- **Selection & induction**
- **Defining performance criteria - individuals and organisation**
- **Agree performance measures & targets - encourage team members to connect goals with their purpose**
- **Maintain regular feedback/reviews - make it two-way**
- **Create a coaching culture to sustain team member engagement and support continuous improvement**

It is important to recognise that it is not just the performance outcome that needs to be assessed; so does the 'how'. Reviews should assess:

- **Organisational fit with business values - this can also include regularly requirements**
- **Identifying skills gaps both for the now and for the future**
- **Realignment of goals to meet changing operating conditions**

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