



The measurable results of personal leadership

Background:

When a new Managing Director arrived at British Gas Business, he saw an opportunity to tap into the potential which this division of Centrica plc had to build on its successes. The division sells gas to businesses throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

Objective:

To strip away some of the elements of behaviour and activities which were not compatible with the business strategy. Establish personal responsibility and a common language amongst leaders at all levels.

A solution:

One of the British Gas Business managers had recently taken part in the Personal Leadership Programme. His feedback and review of the programme to the HR Director and the MD captured their enthusiasm and imagination. They felt that this might help generate the involvement and sense of ownership necessary to achieve the business goals.

Implementation:

In just six weeks, 200 managers experienced the PLP. Their shared journey created new behaviours and established a common language. HR Director Jill Sheddon explains: "We have always recognised that the knowledge and experience of our people is what makes us strong; so generating more open, free-flowing communication that captured, shared and capitalised on the knowledge and experience of our team was really exciting."

Results:

British Gas Business saw positive impacts quickly, achieving a significant, positive shift in employee engagement, absence and labour turnover statistics—employee engagement increased by 21%!

One of the most significant and key measures of success for the business was the reduction in repeat customer calls, which means improved customer service and increased profitability.

"Profit was up by over 50% and we were the most successful division in 2005", adds Jill. "This has been driven by the increased ownership from the front line and the recognition that they have received for the great work that they have done."

"Leadership isn't just about the inspirational leader who leads this team. It's about developing everyone so that they have the chance to make the difference. Finally it's about doing the little things that give them the belief and understanding that 'they' are the difference."

In 2006, British Gas Business employees voted their company one of the 'Top Companies to Work For' in two surveys carried out by the FT and the Sunday Times.

The FT said:

"There is enough energy at British Gas Business to power the entire United Kingdom—and that is just from the staff. You can feel the positively electric enthusiasm the moment you walk into the firm's headquarters."