

Training Journal Awards 2007: Big Win for Bi-Jingo!

Bi-Jingo won the award for Best externally designed and delivered and developed programme at the recent Training Journal Awards 2007. The article below, taken from Training Journal (published Aug 2007) explains all...

Best externally designed and delivered programme

Winner: Bi-Jingo on behalf of Specsavers Optical Superstores



David Lever (left) co-director of Bi-Jingo with Sheila Price of Specsavers being presented with their award by David Wilson, MD of eLearnity

'The most outstanding entry in this category'

– Judges' comment, Training Journal Awards 2007

Introduction

Research conducted by the Retail Training Department of Specsavers identified the need for a sales training intervention, as Mystery Shopper results highlighted frame selection and frame selling skills were inconsistent. Store directors backed up this evidence with qualitative and quantitative feedback indicating that store staff did not want to be seen as 'selling'.

Given the technical nature of optical retailing, the aim was to develop the skills and behaviours of staff to improve their confidence to give customers best advice and recommend the best product options to suit their needs.

Some staff have a negative perception of selling and believe it conflicts with the Specsavers core purpose - 'to passionately provide affordable eyecare for everyone'.

Therefore the programme was about changing perceptions to, 'helping the customer to make choices/decisions based on their lifestyle or needs.

The initiative

A design brief was issued to three companies, each one to develop and deliver a pilot course to a mixture of Specsavers store and Retail Training staff. The selection process was based on feedback from all the delegates scoring the content of the course; the facilitator's delivery style and knowledge; and the course outcomes.

Bi-Jingo was selected unanimously as they demonstrated the greatest understanding of Specsavers needs, culture and store environment. They achieved this by: obtaining background information from key staff; gaining a historical perspective from reviewing previous courses; conducting their own Mystery Shopper research of stores in different regions and conducting comparison research with competitors.

The course focused on behavioural skills, specifically enjoyment/engagement in a format different to other courses by removing paper and desks; kept the content simple – limited theory with lots of high street examples – and ensured it was energetic and fun.

Delegates measured their sales figures for four weeks prior to attendance and were encouraged to have a pre-course briefing with their line manager to set personal objectives. They completed an action plan throughout the course which formed the basis for a post course review with their line manager. On return to store, attendees measured their performance for a four-week period to identify any change in performance.

The programme was rolled out in two phases to allow for possible amendments to the pre/post briefing process.

Results

Evaluation of the programme was based on the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation. Feedback sheets measuring five areas showed an average score of 95.2 per cent. This covered areas such as

course and personal objectives, improvement in skills and behaviours, trainer's knowledge, style of delivery and delegate notes.

Level 2 Learning identifies feedback from the tutors stating that delegates involvement and commitment to learning was largely positive with them acknowledging increased awareness of the importance of behaviours when communicating and 'selling' to customers.

Four weeks after attending the course, delegates were asked to complete a post course review document and return to the retail training team. All stores with staff who attended the course were telephoned to remind them of the need to return the review document.

The review document measured the post course sales performance in the same three areas measured prior to attendance, together with anecdotal feedback from their line manager, peers and customers.

The programme indicated 14 per cent of delegates received a pre- and post- course briefing. These delegates demonstrated an increase in the three measured performance areas as follows: an increase of 5.9 per cent on average frame sale; 16.1 per cent increase in average dispense value and a 39.6 per cent increase in the average number of coats and tints sold daily. However, the increased performance is a by-product of the programme which aimed to change mind-sets and confidence levels.

What the judges say

'Selling Skills – It's all about you' was designed primarily to dispel the myth that 'selling' is bad and its success as the most popular and over-subscribed course in Specsavers portfolio along with demonstrable increases in sales performance made it the most outstanding entry in this category.'