

Case Studies

Case Study: PAUL (UK)

CHALLENGE

PAUL is a French chain of bakery/cafe restaurants operating in more than 37 sites in the UK with a world-wide presence in over 20 countries.

In the UK, Ops Director, Gary Cowles, felt his 5 Operations Managers (OMs), all critical to the success of the UK business, required greater structure and consistency, especially regarding two key elements of their role:

1. Reviewing business performance with their Store Managers (SMs) and agreeing an action plan to cover the next 90 days
2. Conducting critical-impact store visits to review progress of the quarterly plan, while also evaluating the consistency with which brand standards are delivered, which impact the wider customer experience

Like any business operating at scale, some OMs were experiencing a decline in like-for-like sales and failing to meet their revenue budgets. It was clear to Gary that his OMs needed to adopt a new approach to structured monthly business reviews and store visits that would see their management teams truly own the flawless execution of their action plans..

Using simple but effective techniques, MMU helped OMs to significantly improve performance over a 12 month period through a combination of:

- 5 x one day workshop sessions covering the focus areas listed below
- 3 x online virtual group meetings and 1:1 sessions focused on improving quarterly actions plans
- 2 x on-the-road observation and coaching of each OM on an individual basis, as they visited their stores and conducted their monthly reviews with SM.

SPECIFIC FOCUS AREAS:

- **Conducting a 360 feedback process with the OMs**
- Using MMUs own multi-unit management competency framework and 360 feedback platform, each OM asked their SMs, colleagues and line manager for feedback on specific activities and behaviours required to be a world-class OM, Two 'rounds' of 360 feedback were conducting, 12 months apart, to enable PAUL to identify the behavioural changes that its people were seeing amongst the OM team.

- **Creating a structured Monthly Business Review (MBR)**

- With the OMs, we brainstormed what elements should be contained within the MBR process and developed a straightforward tool to encouraged SMs to 'own' their results by being expected to analyse and comment on the reasons for good & poor performance. Once piloted, the MBR process was cascaded across the SM population, with MMU spending time with OMs as they conducted MBRs and then feeding back our observations and suggestions.

- **Developing a focus 90 day action plan**

- OMs identified one to three 'big rocks' for the next 90 days, that covered sales, labour, margin/COGS and people development.
- OMs were coached to create detailed goals that included clear measures (and time scales) alongside specific action steps that would be taken to help achieve the goal (each one with owners and deadlines).
- High leverage, repetitive steps were identified that clarified the proactive commitments being made by individuals that would need frequent completion, as well as one-off key tasks.



• Adopting a more structured approach to unit visits

• In collaboration with the operators, MMU developed a critical impact store visit structure that set out a consistent approach for OMs to follow during the visits they made during the quarter. Whilst not too prescriptive, the tool provided ‘prompts’ for the OM to review during the visit, often allowing them to spot great performance (and recognise this publicly) and, on occasions, identify gaps between brand standards and the reality in store that day.

For example, OMs spent time reviewing each manager’s daily shift briefing to their team. Revenue goals were broken down per shift and team members encouraged to set their own individual sales targets. These were recorded and reviewed at the end of shift. Naturally, with multiple team members working at different times of day, it was impossible to have everyone at each pre-shift. OMs and SMs were encouraged to use tools such as Whats App to keep everyone updated. Performance was reviewed daily, with SMs being asked to ‘send’ videos of the daily shift briefing to their OM so that they could see the quality and content of the briefings being delivered.

Coupled with store visits, this approach rapidly revealed that staff on some shifts did not know their sales targets. OMs went about correcting this by coaching their managers to focus on these gaps in their

internal communication and to follow-up afterwards with questions concerning how the team member would achieve their target and what progress was being made that shift towards it (rather than only checking if they knew what their target was). OMs reported that the structure kept them focused on relevant aspects of their 90 day ‘Big Rock’ action plans to resolve the most pressing challenges. Significantly, they saw how simple behaviours discussed in the programme – such as asking a manager at the end of a meeting to recap the agreed action points – led to greater clarity and delivery of the steps needed to boost performance.

• Recognising performance improvements

- Commonly available tools such as Whats App, were used to recognise success and encourage even greater performance.
- Importantly, MMU focused managers on celebrating the most improved personal performance (shift-on-shift) as well as recognising the top sales performers. This showed individual team members how much they were improving, giving them confidence to push further. The additional benefit was the help this approach gave to demonstrating how growth can be achieved through a culture of shared success.

OUTCOMES

Behavioural changes adopted by the OMs were reflected in the second round of 360 feedback which occurred 12 months after round one.

In particular, the main focus areas for PAUL UK following round one all significantly improved over the time frame of the programme*.

“Conducts structured monthly business reviews with managers/ teams” -

Increased from an average of 3.9 to 4.7 / 5

“Creates detailed quarterly action plans, reviewed regularly” -

Increases from 3.8 to 4.4 / 5

*5 point scale, based on how consistently the OM demonstrates the given behaviour.

Business performance, measured by positive increased in LFL %, saw a dramatic improvement as the business entered the final quarter of the year.

December (period 12) saw double digit sales growth of +20%, resulting in the business exceeding its sales and profit targets for the first time in several years. Despite tough trading conditions in the UK market for the hospitality sector, Paul UK saw like-for-like sales rise 3.4% for the year ending 31 December 2018, with turnover up 7.4% to £38m.

Active Senior Management Support

One of the critical elements in the success of the programme was the endorsement and active involvement of the Ops Director, Gary Cowles. Without his reinforcement of the programme aims & aims, coupled with his disciplined approach to allowing the OMs to remain focused on executing their action plans, the results would not have been so impressive.

“The OMs are acting in a consistent manner, and, quite frankly, behaving as professional OMs should.

I can’t emphasise enough how much the MMU programme has helped them to demonstrate the behaviours we needed and to keep them focused and ‘on track’ ”.

Gary Cowles, Ops Director, PAUL UK

