

Performance Development Planning

Objectives

Sky, one of the UK's largest broadcasting companies, has enlisted Steps as a training partner for both live and media-based learning. Using filmed drama, Steps recently created a resource for the whole business at Sky, displaying approaches to Performance and Development Plan (PDP) review conversations. The focus was on communication skills and objectivity to help keep PDP conversations professional, honest and business-driven. The videos were made available to HR and business managers to help them facilitate live workshops within their teams, with an accompanying facilitation pack. They were also made available to all employees to view online.

Approach

Sky asked us for a visual product which focused on behavioural aspects of PDP conversations. We developed short practical videos that introduced a basic feedback model for the workforce to apply. The bank of scenarios we created, representing a given situation from several different perspectives, enabled the viewer to consider their own default approach and to explore alternative view points. *"These practical demonstrations bring the subtle behaviours that make for a successful (or not so successful) conversation to life in a way that we could never achieve in a written information pack or presentation"* said Laura Seber, Senior Talent Development Consultant at Sky, *"Steps' wry observation of what happens in real life injects a degree of humour into the scripts that helps make a serious message more compelling for people to watch and reflect on"*.

Sky contains many varied sectors within their business, from office-based Customer Services and corporate functions to field based departments such as Home Service & Supply and Retail Sales. To meet the needs of these varied cohorts, a range of common situations and behaviours were presented, allowing facilitators to select the most relevant content for their part of the business.

In the PDP scenarios, Sky wanted to bring to life what would be a relatively new way of thinking for some managers, namely that they would need to give feedback on behaviour in the workplace as well as meeting targets and objectives. Within the organisation, the PDP process represents both opportunity and challenge for managers and their direct reports, so this renewed focus on the behavioural side was about a constructive and forward-looking approach to development planning and performance conversations. Being able to express and receive feedback is an important contributor to successful performance at Sky, and dealing with challenging conversations and sensitive situations is a key skill, particularly for managers, to develop.

In order to develop realistic scenarios, Steps carried out research across the business, identifying elements that needed to be recognised, such as employees' previous experiences and expectations of the PDP conversation. We used actors that were reflective of the diversity within Sky, and costume and good production quality also added to the credibility of the videos and increased resonance for the viewers. The videos were designed and developed in consultation with Laura Seber, Senior Talent Development Consultant at Sky, who was also present on set to collaborate with the Steps team.

Outcomes

"These videos have been well received at workshops around the business, and the fact we have them on-line means that all employees can have that experience, no matter where they work or what shift pattern they are on." - Laura Seber added. Since completing the production of the PDP scenarios, Steps have been working with Sky to make two further videos which are currently in development. These videos will explore excellence in recruitment and the application of Sky values throughout operational processes elsewhere in the business.