



**The Motley Fool**



## Redefining a culture of high performance

### Objective

Steps ran a people management training programme - designed to cover skills and behaviours, performance-related feedback and managing conflict - for key members of Fool.co.uk's management team.

*"We have very capable managers but we had not provided formal training in people management skills before," said Marisa Schlichting, HR Manager at Fool.co.uk. "We wanted to give them an overview of the key aspects of people management and we felt that drama-based training would be the most engaging approach."*

### Approach

Steps was chosen over two other drama providers and we worked closely with Fool.co.uk's HR Manager and wider team to design the programme, which was delivered off-site in two half-day sessions. *"Steps researched our organisation and interviewed members of staff so they could properly tailor the drama scenarios and the learning specifically for us and the types of issues we face,"* said Marisa Schlichting.

The Steps actor-facilitators began the first session with an icebreaking drama scenario, showing poor management in a parallel organisation. A facilitated discussion followed on what makes a good manager, what gets in the way and what behaviours help to facilitate effective outcomes. Steps then ran two further scenarios covering issues around performance management and motivation.

*"This was a very effective and engaging programme,"* said Marisa Schlichting. *"Steps are such good actors and they made the scenarios very believable. The delegates enjoyed contributing and seeing the results of their suggestions. The learning points were brought out vividly."*

The first session ended with Steps providing models and techniques for giving positive and negative feedback to others and for listening and questioning. In the second session, the delegates worked in small groups to develop a 10-point 'management charter' for Fool.co.uk, which covered issues such as the need to communicate clearly, lead by example, show respect and be approachable, supportive, responsible, progressive and fair.

Steps followed this with a conflict management exercise, in which the delegates acted as a mediator between two people who had let a dispute affect their performance. Each delegate then took part in one-to-one role plays, with an actor-facilitator playing a subordinate with a work issue that needed resolution. The delegates received feedback from their peers on their conduct and also from the actor-facilitator on how their management style was received.

### Outcomes

Feedback was consistently high and Marisa Schlichting believes the training will have knock-on benefits for the organisation. *"The online financial market is very competitive,"* she said. *"We have clear values that define our business and we want to be the best company we can. This training will help to move us forward because it has given our managers the skills and tools they need to lead and drive better motivated and more performance-oriented teams."*