

Bespoke Leadership Development Programme

MyTravel Airways, one of the leading charter airlines operated as an in-house airline for the MyTravel Group Plc. prior to its merger with Thomas Cook Airline in April 2008. My Travel Airways employed over 2000 staff, and flew to over 70 destinations around the world from across the UK. The Cabin Crew were managed, when operating, by Cabin Supervisors. The Cabin Supervisors (CSs) had a been exposed to a number of training programmes over the years and with the challenges the business was contending with it was seen as important to deliver an intervention to further engage this influential and significant group of managers.

The challenge

MyTravel was in financial difficulty and went through several years of rationalisation and layoffs that affected all areas of the business. This included the airline and the crew community where roughly 30% of employees were made redundant. This inevitably has a detrimental impact on morale which in turn affects the quality of the service that is provided. The Cabin Supervisors have a crucial role in managing and leading their teams; engaging and inspiring the crew was an important aim of this programme. With significant budget restrictions and cutbacks to the service the crew's role in delivering an excellent customer experience had become even more significant.

The solution

We developed a bespoke programme, the Cabin Supervisors' Development Programme (CSDP). This was designed with a representative working group that included Cabin Supervisors and their managers. Key stakeholders included the General Manager of the Cabin Crew, the Regional Cabin Crew managers and the programme's sponsor, the Director of Cabin Services. Additionally the Cabin Crew's union, Amicus, were consulted throughout the project.

The structure of the programme was a four day residential programme focussed on the role of the Cabin Supervisor in terms of:

- ✓ Personal Leadership - how their beliefs, attitudes and emotions affect their behaviour and in turn how their behaviours influence others
- ✓ Team Leader – how they could manage and lead their teams to higher individual and team performance
- ✓ Performance Management – introduction of a new performance management system
- ✓ Business Appreciation – developing a working understanding of the commercial aspects of the business and the industry.

The objective was to increase the buy-in and engagement of the Cabin Supervisors and provide them with additional skills to lead and manage the crew. By developing and engaging the Cabin Supervisors the ultimate objective was to improve the buy-in and commitment and performance of the cabin crew.

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The results

The programme was initially delivered to 200 cabin supervisors with each event having supervisors from different bases across the UK. The programme's success in terms of feedback and results was such that the programme was rolled out to the C2s, the Cabin Supervisors' deputy. In total nearly 400 people completed the programme. The level of ownership and engagement increased, on-board Customer Satisfaction Survey results improved and on-board sales revenues per customer increased. This was a significant achievement as on-board sales revenues accounted for in excess of £15m/year with high net contribution. In support of the CSDP we also developed and implemented a coaching programme for the Base Cabin Crew Managers (the Cabin Supervisors' managers). The combined effect of this improved the relationship between Cabin Supervisors and their managers and overall improved the way the crew were managed and lead.

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