



## **Sales Case Study**

### **Issue**

Etiihad Airways, the National Airline of the United Arab Emirates, is the world's fastest growing airline. Since their launch in 2003 they have expanded to a point where they are operating to 84 destinations and carrying more than 7 million Guests. In 2012 they announced their entry into profit – an incredible achievement for an airline just 8 years old.



This phenomenal growth strategy resulted in a need to create a sales force that stood out from the competitors in each global market, and develop sales people who adopted a structured, disciplined approach to their activities balancing the generation of profitable revenue with the need to provide the best possible service to both travel partners and corporate customers.

### **Solution**

We initially worked with the senior management team to strip apart the current practices – to identify the critical processes, tools and behaviours that would deliver the required standards. Engaging the sales teams was an important part of the discovery phase – cross functional groups were gathered together to work on role profiles and to design a core set of sales standards and disciplines that would be the foundation for future development needs.

Initial training took place for each member of the sales force in what was termed the 'basic essentials'. These workshops focused on introducing and implementing a standard sales call process from the initial client research and qualification stages through to gaining significant commitment. Sales disciplines were introduced to achieve a level of consistency in approach.

At the same time we worked on selecting and developing a bespoke salesforce automation system. Eventually, working closely with the selected supplier, salesforce.com, to design a tool that helped to embed and drive the sales disciplines and practices. Every member of the global sales force was trained in how to get the best from the system.

To support this training, all managers were trained in how to conduct field sales coaching calls – a vital part of the implementation plan. These coaching activities were supported by the introduction of a web-based performance recording tool which allowed individual sales people to see the development of their skill over time. This also allowed for the analysis of skills across each station which will result in more tailored assessment of both team and individual training needs.

Further training was also rolled out across the network. The second programme focused specifically on the analysis, negotiation and activation of corporate business. It was an intensive four day programme used an ongoing case study to analyse, practice and review sales, negotiation and presentation skills. A third phase took account management to a higher level – a focus on developing business within those accounts deemed as 'key'. Selected, high performing, salespeople studied ways to penetrate their existing accounts further through accessing a broader decision making unit. Other topics included selling high, political selling and influencing techniques.

Our four year partnership with Etihad Airways has now come to a natural close. Our final task was to help train internal sales trainers to develop the capability and competence to deliver the suite of sales training programmes. We are delighted to have been able to leave these programmes as a legacy and feel that we have contributed to the development of one of the world's leading airline sales teams.



## **Client comments**

"Gary and his company GB Training & Consulting Ltd have delivered outcomes of the highest quality customised to the business requirements of the Etihad Airways sales force. This has enabled us to deliver a comprehensive training programme across our sales force in record time and with immediate results."

*Ian Lovelock, Regional General Manager, Etihad Airways*

"Gary and his team at GB Training provided my team with very valuable sales and account management training over a 3 year period. The quality and relevance of the training was first class and most importantly of all they are great people to deal with. Furthermore they understand different cultures within an organisation and adapted the training needs to realise those differences. I would recommend Gary and GB and I hope to work with him again in the future."

*Clive Wratten, Country Manager UK, Etihad Airways*

"Gary and his team have done to me what no other trainer was able to do for me; appreciate and enjoy sales!  
Through their personal and creative methods, GB training was able to give a whole new perspective in sales and how it should be conducted and managed in a professional, friendly, and goal oriented environment.  
Thank you Gary and Jacqui for sparking hope and motivation within me and all the colleagues I've ever worked with. You will all be terribly missed."

*Haitham Subaihi, Vice President Mid-Atlantic USA, Etihad Airways*

"After working together with GB Training in an initial workshop in Al Ain in 2008, they successfully developed and executed training programs for Etihad Sales staff. The initial training and follow up courses have laid the foundation for Etihad Sales staff being considered the most professional and dedicated team in interactions with trade partners and corporate accounts. "The Etihad Way" also lead to implementation of, and improvements in salesforce.com as call planning system, which is used as one of the key information systems in Etihad's Commercial organization."

*Joost den Hartog, Vice President, Europe*

## **Find out more**

To talk to us about how we could add similar value to your business please contact us.

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