



National Training Awards
2010

A gem of a scheme

Supervisors working for the world's largest specialist retail jeweller, Signet, have become the company's jewel in the crown after successfully completing a new training programme.

In May 2009, Signet who operate under brands such as H Samuel, Ernest Jones and Leslie Davis, gave a select number of supervisors the opportunity to trial a new management training programme. The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course, designed in collaboration with Signet aimed to equip supervisors with the right skills to stand in as duty managers in the evenings and on Sundays.

Sheelagh Brooks, Learning and Development Advisor at Signet explained, "With customers demanding that more of our stores open seven days a week, and for longer hours, supervisors have increasingly been required to act as Duty Managers on Sundays and late nights. This has led to a shift in their responsibilities from selling to leading the team. Yet their development had only prepared them to be senior salespeople, not team managers."

In a bid to address the problem, a new management programme was developed. Also, at the time, company data revealed that more supervisors than other management roles were leaving the company and Signet was keen to reverse the trend. It was hoped the scheme would be the solution to both challenges.

Mrs Brooks continued, "It's important to equip supervisors with [management] tools, not only so that they can manage a store and maintain service and leadership standards but also so that they can become our store managers of the future. This

means we need them to be skilled, confident and invested in Signet as a long term career choice.”

In order to develop a qualification that could be delivered in-house, the company underwent the rigorous process of becoming an accredited ILM centre. By doing this, Signet had the freedom to design the right course for its staff. The result of which was an ILM Level 2 Award for Team Leaders.

The company handpicked 67 supervisors to learn three units: Developing Yourself as a Team Leader; Motivating the Work Team to Perform; and Leading your Team.

Over a period of six months, the trainees took part in three one-day workshops, completed ‘reflective review’ assignments, and were assessed on the job by workplace tutors.

A total of 63 candidates completed the course and 61 achieved the Award. The programme, which cost the company just over £24,000 to implement, has been so successful that a further group is now undergoing the training.

The group of achievers were recognised at a special award ceremony and are now mentoring the latest group of trainees. What’s more, Signet reports seeing positive effects of the training in their stores.

Commenting on the success of the programme, Store Operations Director, Kevin Ryan said, “Seeing the successful participants in store has really brought home the benefits of the programme as there is a visible change in how they operate. Rather than solely focussing on selling duties, they now direct more of their efforts onto their people, keeping them motivated and looking for opportunities to maximise sales.”

ENDS

Entry name: The ILM Level 2 Award in Team Leadership for Retail Supervisors

Location: Signet Trading Ltd, Hunters Road, Hockley, Birmingham, B19 1DS

Entry no: e100778

Region: WM

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