



**Huthwaite**<sup>®</sup>  
International



Case Study



# Royal Mail - Delivering sales excellence for a new generation

# Royal Mail

## How Royal Mail is embracing innovative new ways of achieving sustainable behaviour change for its trailblazing sales apprenticeship scheme

Royal Mail Group is a global organisation operating in 44 countries around the world and one of the UK's largest employers with over 140,000 people who help to deliver more than 1.8 billion parcels and 14 billion letters every year.

In early 2018, Royal Mail conducted research into its employees and found that there was a pressing need to bring in a new generation of sales professionals. To address this they teamed up with leading academic and industry leaders to launch a Level 6 apprenticeship for college leavers who could earn a BSc whilst working. The launch of this 'Trailblazer scheme' is the first ever sales apprenticeship initiative that brings together sales best practice and high-quality professional work-based learning.

To support this sales apprenticeship launch, the Royal Mail looked to Huthwaite International to provide new innovative ways of sales training delivery that would drive genuine behaviour change.

### Why the need for selling skills development?

Royal Mail already had a sales methodology in place and was hesitant to change the model, but after researching its effectiveness, it became clear that the methodology used was largely focused around 'opportunity development'. They also reviewed their existing in-house training and found this focused on general sales information. What they really needed was a sales methodology that would provide a solid foundation of skills and knowledge, allowing participants to excel in sales and provide a framework for learning that would sustain and consistently build on their knowledge. This led them look at SPIN® Selling that combines both the methods and delivery approach to provide a unique learning experience.

Senior Sales Operations Leader, André Lahiff said *"Our current sales onboarding programmes tell employees about their job, the products we sell and who their customers are. But when it came to HOW to sell - we identified a gap."*

### Why SPIN®?

Like many sales professionals, the team at Royal Mail had prior knowledge of Huthwaite International's SPIN® Selling methodology. Both André and the National Sales Director Mike Gibson, attended an Association of Professional Sales (APS) event, where Neil Rackham - founder of Huthwaite International and honorary President of the APS was speaking. They felt that Huthwaite International's timeless SPIN® sales methodology, the most researched and validated in the world, coupled with a world class reputation for delivery expertise, would provide Royal Mail with a solid foundation for the sales apprentices. Using SPIN®, they believed they could achieve the sales behaviour change required to significantly improve overall performance.

*"No matter what we've done over the years, it's always pretty much back to the same thing again; who's your customer, what are their needs, why us, how to create value and so on."* André Lahiff

### Huthwaite Collaborative – an effective learning solution

Royal Mail knew that it wanted a fully collaborative learning model from the outset. They believed it would help to upskill their teams without the learning hurdles of more traditional training. Their apprentices have been raised in a digital age where technology as a vehicle for learning is prevalent and a source of information always available to them. So when it came to a learning intervention, it was important for the process to use the same vehicles.

The Huthwaite International Collaborative platform focuses on providing a genuine learning culture through a faster, more measurable and sustainable route. The learning journey combines e-learning tasks and classroom sessions that allow participants to practice their skills and gain encouragement, also supported by expert feedback through coaching. This collaborative approach works perfectly for Royal Mail, fitting around the daily routines of the apprentices and provides a great basis for the sales managers to effectively coach both online and through face to face conversations.

Said André *"The full collaborative learning experience was exactly what we needed when teaching Millennials and Gen Zs. We can provide them with bite-sized pieces of content they can consume and immediately put into practice. Feedback is also extremely important to them and the platform does that particularly well. Users can engage with each other and share comments - the tutors are reaching out and engaging on there too."*

In the past it had been a challenge to get sales teams to complete the online-based learning in working hours whilst they still have customers ringing or deadlines to meet. However, with the regular classroom-based session, the apprentices were much more motivated to finish their online work before seeing the tutors again where they could talk through any issues they had.

## Outcomes achieved

For Royal Mail, the project originally started out as a training initiative, solely for the new apprenticeship scheme. However, due to the success of the programme, it is planned to roll out to the full sales team. Those that have initially been through the training will then act as ambassadors of SPIN<sup>®</sup> and coaches for the rest of their team.

*"Ensuring your frontline managers are engaged is so important"* said André. *"The managers and leaders need to be effective as coaches in helping junior members of the team so that everyone is involved and onboard."*

Two teams of apprentices have completed the training since Huthwaite International began working with Royal Mail in July 2018 - the biggest outcome has been the measurable behaviour change from those cohorts.



SPIN<sup>®</sup> collaborative delivers for us in terms of helping to create new sales opportunities, which can convert quicker to new revenues. We have also sustained and grown existing customer revenues now there is a better understanding of the buying cycle and application of SPIN<sup>®</sup> techniques.

Mike Gibson, National Sales Director, Royal Mail



André Lahiff said: *"We've only been doing the training for six months and, although it is too early to see a monetary figure, the signs are positive There has definitely been a significant behaviour change amongst those teams taking part."*

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Mike Gibson, National Sales Director says: *"We talk a lot about knowledge, skills and behaviours; we can teach the skills, we can find the knowledge, but actually, the real benefit is when you start experiencing the change in people. It's so great to see this with the apprentices – the change from someone who knows nothing about sales, to someone who is effectively selling"*

*"And we can measure what they are achieving in terms of revenue, new opportunities, customer satisfaction - those are the kind of measures that we will now start to build KPI's and targets around."*

## Advice to other organisations?

*"Many organisations see staff training and development as an expendable budget; a "nice to have." However, this is where they need to reconsider their approach"* says André: *"SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling delivered collaboratively isn't just a training course, it is much bigger and more important than that. Implementing it as part of your business training plan will ensure that the sales function is working effectively at the core of your business"*.

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