



**“For the first time we had in front of us a clear way ahead.
A practical, achievable plan that would obviously deliver the
results we were looking for”**

Things were hardly full steam ahead at Eurostar. Despite having a lot of sales people and multiple sales channels, sales targets were not being met. *“At first we went down the obvious route; give people some sales training and sales will improve,”* says their Head of Operations. *“And they did, but only for a couple of weeks. At that point we realised it needed a more comprehensive approach.”*

However, the thought of exposing the business to the rigours of a full operational review wasn't universally welcomed. The Director of Sales and Distribution at Eurostar admits, *“When the review was first suggested a number of us were quite blasé; convinced that we knew what the issues were*

and the scale of them. People were concerned about the time it would take, using up valuable time when we could be putting things right, and they worried about having consultants poking around the business, upsetting people. Thankfully, a few enlightened individuals stood their ground and made it happen.”

Winning over the skeptics

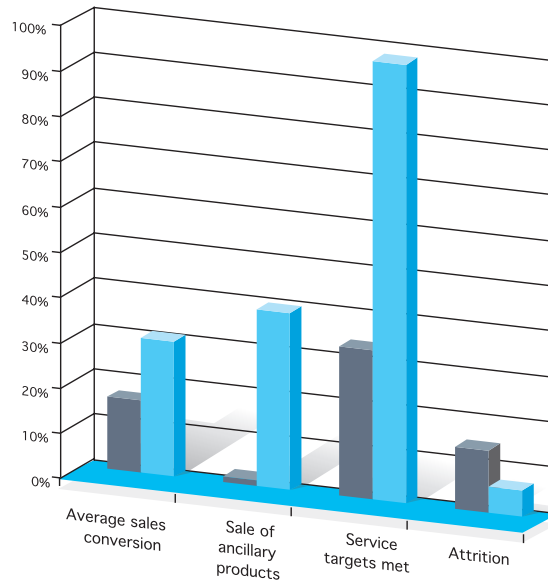
Skeptics were won over by the depth of the review, the speed at which it was conducted. The fact that the Blue Sky team discussed the objectives and methodology with Eurostar's staff. Staff had to be asked some very direct questions, but this was done in a non-threatening, non-judgemental manner, and people at every level of the business were invited to contribute. Says Eurostar's Director of Sales and Distribution *“This really paid off further down the line when implementing*

change as people felt it was their plan, not one forced on them by some external consultants."

The review tackled three key questions. How could Eurostar ensure their sales operations met the needs of the business now and in the future? What was the quickest, most cost-effective way of implementing improvements, while supporting staff through the change? And what return on investment could they expect?

The process was not entirely comfortable. "A lot of what we discovered was hard to take," says the Director of Sales and Distribution. "We thought we had ticked many of the boxes. We had a coaching programme in place, we ran regular reports, we incentivised people and we trained them. The fact that most of these activities contributed nothing to the business objectives was shocking. We were just going through the motions with people that didn't have the right skills or attitude to deliver. They were using processes that were designed in isolation by people who had lost sight of the objective."

Despite the challenges and the steep learning curve, the results were phenomenal. Average sales conversion rates doubled, sales of ancillary products increased from 2% to 29%, and service level targets were finally being met, almost reaching 100%.



An electric atmosphere

"Most importantly for me," says the Director of Sales and Distribution, "The results achieved were not only in the targets being met, but in staff morale, the culture of the operations, and response from customers."

Staff attrition rates halved. People felt more valued and at long last began to enjoy their jobs. So much so that a local journalist who'd kept track of the operation in Ashford was moved to write: "The place is unrecognisable. Before, rows of people sitting at computer screens with miserable looks on their faces, today an electric atmosphere, trophies and sales competitions everywhere. People couldn't wait to talk to me."

Looks like Eurostar's sales are back on track.

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