

Case Study:

Greene King Pub
United Kingdom

PI Worldwide 

Develop Selling Skills for Top Sales Performance

Greene King Pub Company is a publicly quoted brewer and retailer in the U.K., and has been in business for over 200 years. Combining successful traditional ale brands with a forward thinking focus, Greene King has grown steadily, reporting sales in excess of 1 billion pounds.

Joe Parks is the Free Trade Sales Director of the Brewing and Brands Division, which is responsible for the marketing, sales, production and distribution of Greene King's quality range of ales and beers. He oversees the national sales team that sells beer in its draught form to independent pubs and clubs. Joe and his team position the high quality and long heritage of the products and services as the key market differentiators to their business. When Joe joined the company in 1996, he was given the behavioral assessment tool Predictive Index® (PI) as a way for Greene King to ensure Joe was the right fit for the company and the job. The insight from PI was so accurate that Joe implemented the use of PI to the sales team. Greene King has been using PI across its divisions for approximately four years.

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Joe Parks
Free Trade Sales Director

The Challenge: One of the unique challenges for Greene King Pub was the ability to identify sales traits necessary to sell in a more relaxed business environment like a pub or restaurant; skills not readily apparent during a typical sales interview. In an effort to improve their recruiting efforts and overall sales team performance, the sales management team wanted to find a way to identify the behavioral skills of their top sales performers. By targeting those skills, the management team could then sharpen their hiring skills to gain competitive edge. Their second challenge was the need for a formal sales training program to address the needs of the individual sales people as well as the team. It had been several years since Greene King offered sales training as they found the value was not being realized at the time. David Holmes, sales consultant PI Europe, a PI Worldwide® member firm, introduced the sales development tools, Selling Skills Assessment Tool (SSAT)[™] and Customer- Focused Selling (CFS)[™]. David's vast experience in working with large sales organizations proved beneficial in helping Joe realize that the brewing division could go beyond the recruitment process and use the powerful combination of benchmarked metrics with SSAT and consultative training (CFS) to identify areas of strength and weakness and then target the training to develop, coach and drive top sales performance.

PI and Sales Tools Implementation: All District and Regional Sales Managers as well as the Sales Director had already completed PI profiles which allowed Greene King's management team to understand the behavioral composition of their team. To assess the value of the sales solutions, the sales managers and HR manager completed the SSAT. Based on positive feedback from management, PI, SSAT and CFS were implemented across the sales team. David and his group administered 30 SSAT's and conducted two one-day CFS training seminars. The response was very positive. The sales reps felt invigorated and more confident in their ability to sell. Joe explains, “The SSAT helps in measuring the breadth of the knowledge of customer management, while PI identified the behavioral profile and fit for the role. All of these tools enabled us to understand the strengths and gaps of each individual, while providing a comprehensive training program for our entire team.”

The brewing division used PI to identify the ‘natural behaviors’ of their ‘most successful’ sales people- those individuals who achieve a top level of performance. Using this information, Greene King Pub was able to develop strong behavioral job models

for their key sales position, District Sales Manager.

The combination of PI, SSAT, and CFS has been invaluable to District and Regional Managers to coach the sales team as well as to identify potential sales candidates from outside the brewing industry that possess the desired sales skills necessary for success.

By using PI, SSAT and CFS, Greene King has created an effective process to identify, compare and contrast individual drives and selling skills, and build “best of breed” sales teams and to drive sustainable sales results and superior customer service. “Sales turnover has been reduced by 20% from where it was just a few years ago,” explains Joe.

The Results: With stronger selling skills and a sharper focus on the needs of the customer, the brewing division has enjoyed a significant improvement in retaining their larger customers especially challenged during the current economic downturn.

The Brewing and Brands Division recently won new business in major U.K. sports markets including several rugby and cricket clubs. Based on current annual projections, this business is expected to yield \$4 million dollars in new sales revenue, while creating higher morale within the division.

The new found confidence in the sales team resulted in Joe’s request for additional sales management training for the 6 managers nominated as ‘best in group’. David’s team delivered the Coaching for Sales Excellence program. The coaching workshop was a “revelation” to the sales managers, allowing them to increase their effectiveness for improved motivation and performance.

As a result of the Customer-Focused Selling and Coaching for Excellence workshops, Greene King developed a sales management program. Continuous Improvement Club is a forum which allows managers to share best selling practices in coaching their sales talent using the foundation of the sales training as a development tool and benchmark.

With the success Joe and his team have demonstrated since working with David, PI, SSAT and CFS have become part of the Free Trade Sales Division’s culture, and have been recently introduced to the Greene King Pub National Accounts Team.

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