

Background

Plymouth is the regional capital for Devon and Cornwall and is lucky to enjoy a spectacular setting that looks out over a large natural harbour, while only being minutes from Dartmoor National Park. Now, in the biggest scheme since the end of World War II, plans are underway for the City’s revitalisation. Nearly £300 million is being invested to link the city’s historical waterfront with a top-class urban centre.



“City College Plymouth is at the forefront of the development in supporting local employers and individuals, and has recently introduced the Employer Endorsement Scheme that further supports our focus on employability. Being able to work closely with employers within the city has a two-way flow of benefits - companies have a real input into what we deliver here at the College, and our students have enhanced workplace opportunities and an insight into industry specific

areas of work.” Viv Gillespie, Principal

Business situation

Employers across Devon and Cornwall have access, via the College, to specialised employee training programmes and support to ensure their businesses are able to compete effectively. In supporting employers the College recognised that whilst Key Accounts had been identified and allocated an account manager, they had been centred around the Business Skills Advisors, working closely but informally with colleagues from across the College to meet business needs.

“In order to ensure that Key Account Management is effective and meets the needs of employers, the new KAM strategy had to embrace the whole organisation covering every “moment of truth” in the employer journey. The need was to formalise the approach and to engage key cross-College staff. At the same time challenging current practice, further embedding a co-ordinated, professional approach to managing relationships with those employers who view the College as a trusted, valued training partner, and impacting positively on the employer experience of the College.” Sarah Hicks, Commercial Manager



Solution

As specialists in Sales and KAM solutions Perperitus were engaged by the College to deliver a programme designed to meet the Senior Management Team’s objectives for a more strategic approach to KAM by:

- Implementing a structured, effective and proven KAM methodology
- Formalising the identification and selection of the top Key Accounts
- Facilitate KAM Workshops to increase collaboration and draw on the knowledge, experience and skills of a cross-college team to develop Key Account Plans
- Challenging the current thinking and introducing new approaches to ensure all Key Account opportunities are identified and considered

Approach

Our approach drew on the highly successful Perperitus KAM methodology, our experience in FE and commercial enterprises and the inclusiveness of the cross functional team. To gain the maximum benefit the core of the KAM implementation was based on a series of ½ day workshops covering one key account per session. During these workshops the team worked on a number of tasks culminating in the development of a Key Account Plan and action list. Working in a collaborative way and with a single objective each team was made up of:

- A member of the SMT acting as the sponsor for the Key Account
- The member of Employer Engagement responsible for the KA
- Representation from the Delivery, Curriculum, Marketing and operations teams

Outcomes

Key Account Awareness – using a multi-disciplined team representing all employer facing groups of the College achieved a level of understanding, collaboration and help that was previously understood but not put into practice. *“The impact of this on the Employer Engagement team and ultimately the Key Accounts has been significant in both focus and depth of the understanding of the employers business needs.” Sean Gibson – Business Skills Advisor, Team Leader*

Employer Engagement - the real benefit of a programme such as this is in the impact on the business, especially in terms of revenue. Part of the benefit the KAM approach brings is to allow the team to look outside of the box and consider what is possible in a Key Account. *“This approach has led to the team raising awareness, bidding for and winning opportunities that would have otherwise been missed.” Sarah Hicks, Commercial Manager*

Key Account Development – the KAM process is now embedded in the day to day activity of the Employer Engagement Team. The Key Account Plans are shared and updated on a regular basis. New accounts proposed for Key Account status are assessed against the selection criteria developed in the initial workshops. This gives a solid foundation to the selection and engages a collaborative approach.

Sustaining KAM momentum - all Key Accounts are now reviewed by the extended team on a quarterly basis. This provides the vehicle for driving collaboration on issues, opportunities and the ever important communication within the team. It also encourages communication to other parts of the College and externally to all stakeholders including the Key Account.

“City Plymouth College continues to develop their Key Account initiative to support the ever changing needs of the larger employers in the Plymouth area. The KAM methodology and tools from Perperitus provide an important platform for the skills and knowledge required to deliver this effectively.” Alison Lewis, Director of Employer Engagement at City College Plymouth

