



MARKS &
SPENCER



Developing
Intercultural
Competence

Marks & Spencer

Marks & Spencer is one of the world's leading retail organisations, employing over 80,000 people in the UK and internationally, with over 700 stores in the UK and over 400 stores in 44 territories across Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

In November 2010, Marks & Spencer set out a three year plan with the aim of becoming a truly international, multi-channel retailer.

As part of this strategy, an increasing number of UK-based employees will now be working with international colleagues, suppliers and, ultimately, customers.

The degree of engagement will be varied and include collaborating on projects, managing international teams and influencing key stakeholders.

Communicaid

Communicaid is a global culture and communication skills consultancy that assists the world's leading organisations to mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities of working in a complex and ever-changing international environment.

We work with international organisations such as Marks & Spencer to provide a complete suite of consultancy services as well as targeted intercultural, language and communication skills training.

Helping Marks & Spencer Develop the Intercultural Competence of its Workforce

Marks & Spencer's Management Development team selected Communicaid as its training partner for the design and delivery of a suite of intercultural training programmes for the General Merchandising and Food divisions.

Communicaid was commissioned to develop the intercultural competence of Marks & Spencer employees and equip them with the strategies and techniques required to work more effectively in the expanding international environment in which the company now operates.



Training Objectives

The core aims of the training programme were to:

- Raise awareness of the impact that culture and cultural differences have on business relationships and working practices
- Provide employees with the knowledge and tools to work and communicate successfully with different cultures
- Develop practical strategies for building more effective cross-cultural team relationships

Training Approach

Working in close collaboration with Marks & Spencer's Management Development team, Communicaid gained a thorough understanding of the organisational culture, the strategic international vision and the types of interactions employees would have with their international counterparts.

Key to the success of the programme was the need to design a high-impact, interactive workshop for more than 600 employees with diverse roles, responsibilities and levels of experience at Marks & Spencer. Training also had to be relevant to employees with varying degrees of international experience and incorporate practical examples and exercises. Following a detailed Diagnostic Consultancy with

key stakeholders at Marks & Spencer, Communicaid created a blended three-part training programme to meet the objectives of the target population. The resulting programme, "Working across Cultures", is a practical and highly interactive workshop suitable for employees who work or plan to work with international colleagues, suppliers and customers.

This interactive face-to-face programme is supplemented by the online cultural training resource CultureWizard™. All employees attending the programme gain access both before and after training to this versatile online toolkit which provides targeted cultural information and a wide range of global skills assessment tools to continue learning beyond the training room.



Our Solution

Stage One

Pre-training tasks to identify individuals' training objectives and cultural preferences.

Stage Two

An interactive one-day "Working across Cultures" workshop which included the following key components:

- Understanding culture and core cultural values
- The impact of culture on working practices and relationships
- Assessment of delegates' own cultural values and behaviours
- Techniques to communicate effectively across cultures
- A framework of best practice and strategies which can be applied to any international context

Stage Three

Ongoing development and support with CultureWizard™ online cultural tools and resources.

Results

To date, Communicaid has delivered “Working across Cultures” to more than 100 Marks & Spencer employees. Delegates who have attended the workshop have reported being more confident and positive about working with their international counterparts.

By understanding their own cultural preferences and those of their international colleagues, employees are now able to build more successful working relationships.

Feedback on all programmes delivered to-date has been consistently positive. Marks & Spencer employees are now able to deploy practical examples when working with their international colleagues and are eager to share their knowledge and tips across the organisation.

The next stage will see employees attend country-specific intercultural workshops suitable for people who manage in or work with a specific target country or region.

Testimonial

“The trainer was immediately engaging, warm and highly informative. She illuminated my desire to work internationally and encouraged me to put into practice all I had learnt, both immediately with the different cultures I encounter in the workplace and, hopefully, in my target role, working overseas in the future.”

Alex Somerfield
GM Development Manager
Marks & Spencer





LONDON T: +44 (0)20 3370 8500
F: +44 (0)20 3370 8501
Communicaid E: info@communicaid.com
Mitre House W: www.communicaid.com
12-14 Mitre Street
London EC3A 5BU
United Kingdom

PARIS T: +33 (0)1 77 71 25 85
F: +33 (0)1 77 71 25 86
Communicaid France E: info@communicaid.fr
4 rue d'Astorg W: www.communicaid.fr
Paris 75008
France

BRUSSELS T: +32 (0)2 808 31 90
F: +32 (0)2 808 31 91
Communicaid E: info@communicaid.be
6th Floor W: www.communicaid.be
Rue Guimard/Guimardstraat, 9
1040 Brussels
Belgium

FRANKFURT T: +49 (0)69 274 015 259
F: +49 (0)69 274 015 183
Communicaid E: info@communicaid.de
Mainzer Landstraße, 27-31 W: www.communicaid.de
60329 Frankfurt
Germany

NEW YORK T: +1 212 618 6369
F: +1 212 618 6309
Communicaid E: info@communicaid.com
Rockefeller Center, 7th Floor W: www.communicaid.com
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
U.S.A

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