

case study



"Crellos' approach was excellent because they used a simple language that everyone is comfortable understanding. I now use this for my personal career development and that of people in my team", Career Manager

EDF Energy shapes up to deliver excellence

In 2009 EDF Energy merged with British Energy creating one of the UK's largest energy companies and the UK's largest producer of electricity.

EDF Energy is one of Europe's largest energy groups. They generate around one fifth of the UK's electricity, employ around 20,000 people, and deliver electricity to around 8 million customer homes and businesses through our public networks.

This has been achieved in a volatile sector with utilities companies facing increasingly diverse issues; finding renewable resources, skill shortages, price instability and a changing regulatory landscape.

The challenge

To stay ahead of the game EDF Energy faces two challenges: to create and deliver innovative business services and to respond to change appropriately. Key to the achievement of these challenges is the delivery of business transformation projects, requiring experts in disciplines such as project management, business analysis, technical architecture and design, finance and infrastructure.

Expertise in these disciplines was traditionally measured using technical skills, however, there was a recognition that to deal with the increasingly complex needs of demanding customers, behavioural skills would be equally, if not more, important.

Designing competency frameworks

EDF Energy partnered with change and talent management consultancy Crellos to define what excellence looked like from both a behavioural and technical point of view. This involved defining the competencies that are core to optimum performance within the organisation in

order to support and develop existing employees to reach that benchmark as well as become more accurate at recruiting new employees.

Initially Crellos facilitated structured fact finding interviews with the heads of each of the five disciplines along with individuals at each role level. This information was mapped onto the Schroder Model of organisational behaviour to create one generic behavioural competency framework applicable to the whole department and tailored to the culture of EDF Energy.

Crellos then tackled technical competencies. Using information gained from the fact finding interviews, industry best practice such as ISEB (the Information Systems Examinations Board) and APM (Association of Project Managers), and external research from other organisations as reference points, Crellos designed technical competency frameworks for each discipline.

The behavioural and technical frameworks were then levelled against each job role to ensure that each employee was clear as to what was expected of them in their role. To help employees take ownership of their personal development Crellos developed a Behavioural Learning Guide which included exercises, questionnaires, tips and development suggestions.

Embedding the frameworks

The project deliverables were signed off at key milestones by a steering group made up from the leaders of each of the competency groups and key stakeholders from HR, Learning & Development, Communications, along with senior business users.

Career Managers from each of the competency groups attended two workshops, one to introduce the behavioural and technical frameworks and the second workshop to develop the Career Managers in the use of the frameworks to construct their own development

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plans. A number of “Competency Champions” from HR, Learning & Development and Practice Development have been developed and accredited to 85% accuracy in the assessment of the EDF Energy behavioural framework. These Competency Champions will play a crucial role in supporting the Career Managers to use the frameworks in their own and others’ development planning.

“Crelos used a simple language that everyone is comfortable understanding. I am using the frameworks for my personal career development and that of the people in my team, as I am able to explain it to them easily”, EDF Energy Career Manager.

Success so far

The success of the project was initially measured by the number of Career Managers who had development plans containing relevant and stretching behavioural objectives. This in itself is a big step for these individuals who were not familiar with competency frameworks or personal development planning and in the past had concentrated only on “what” they achieved rather than “how” they achieved their business objectives.

“Through working in partnership with Crelos we have put in place the building blocks which will enable us to achieve a significant and measurable improvement in employee performance. In addition, we are also increasing opportunities for our employees to develop and improve both their behavioural and technical skills” Caroline Pear, Practice Development Manager.