

CASE STUDY

BAM builds on its longstanding partnership with Roffey Park to deliver a new management development programme

Introduction

BAM Construct UK Ltd is part of the European construction enterprise, Royal BAM Group, with origins in the UK stretching back as far as 1874. The company has a large network of offices covering England, Scotland and Wales and projects in the education, retail, mixed use development, health, office, leisure and law order sectors. With over 2,600 employees across the UK and over £1bn in revenues, it is one of the UK's leading construction groups.

BAM has partnered with Roffey Park to deliver leadership and management development programmes since 1990. It first began with a Principles of Management programme aimed at junior managers, which has seen over 150 participants in the past 13 years develop the skills they need to progress within the company.

The challenge

This programme was complemented by a Strategic Management programme for senior managers which ran between 2002 and 2004. This was a resounding success but after three programmes the target audience had essentially been exhausted in that everyone at the appropriate level of the business had participated in the programme. However, Chris Jones, Director of Learning and Development at BAM, saw the need for a new programme to address a different segment of the workforce.

"Our previous programmes had been very effective at helping our junior and senior employees to develop their skills and progress within the company," explains Chris. "It felt appropriate to develop a new programme that would give the middle management the same opportunity to benefit from the Roffey Park experience."

The solution

Chris began by running a focus group with previous managers to establish what the programme should cover and canvassed potential participants to ascertain what skills they felt they needed to develop. Armed with this information, he worked

with Roffey Park to design a programme that would deliver the right development training. By the end of 2004, the Advanced Management programme was ready to be rolled out.

"I've worked with Roffey Park for many years so I knew that their approach would be ideal. A lot of participants arrive expecting a traditional, didactic programme so they are delighted to be immersed in Roffey Park's experiential, participative environment," adds Chris.

The Advanced Management programme, attended by twelve delegates each time, is comprised of three three-day modules, which take place over the course of three months. The first module focuses on developing management skills; the second on collaborative working, with the final module centred around influencing and negotiation.

"The first module includes a 360 degree appraisal process, Myers-Briggs® evaluation and a lot of inter-personal feedback to help participants identify where and how they can strengthen their management skills," continues Chris. "The second module is arguably more significant. The construction industry is traditionally very aggressive, with the potential for conflict between clients, architects, the construction team and other stakeholders. However, in recent years, we have moved towards a more collaborative approach. This means involving everybody from the outset, setting clear shared goals and working together to construct the best building possible. The second module is designed to equip people with the tools and skills to collaborate effectively."



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Running through this second module is a case study based on a real life public sector project in which participants are split into two groups, given a brief and then given the opportunity to meet the council project leader and other stakeholders. Based on these discussions, the groups must put together a coherent and commercially viable solution that meets everyone's needs.

The final module is equally challenging, involving a briefing from BAM's board of directors asking participants to present a business improvement project. This involves working in groups to research a concrete business challenge, exploring ways of addressing it and then reporting back to the board.

"In a way, the final module pulls together the learning from the programme as a whole as it demands management skills and collaboration," explains Chris. "But, crucially, it also helps participants hone their ability to influence senior executives."

All modules take place on-site at Roffey Park – another key factor in the programme's success. "It's a different way of learning. The environment itself is so far removed from the typical hustle and bustle of a construction site that it gives our participants time and space to focus on personal development and reflect on the experience," says Chris. "And the style of training is excellent. Not only are Roffey Park's team knowledgeable, they are also great at drawing people out and getting them involved. Their experience is second to none."

The benefits

Participants benefit from the programme from the outset; particularly by working with employees who are drawn from across BAM's different business units and support departments. "One of the great aspects of the programme is that it encourages a cross-pollination of ideas by individuals from across the business that would normally never meet," comments Chris. "It helps participants understand other

aspects of our business and disseminate ideas and information that they can take back to the workplace."

And on returning to work, participants find themselves equipped with the confidence and skills to deliver more for the company. Of the 120 people that have participated in the programme, over 90 per cent remain at BAM. Chris puts this high staff retention rate down to the way in which Roffey Park has helped them develop their careers. As a further consequence, a high proportion have also been promoted since taking the programme.

"We see a shift in the way people manage and work because we've given them the tools they need to succeed," concludes Chris. "Roffey Park has again delivered a bespoke programme that has helped our staff evolve on a personal level and, in doing so, has helped keep our company at the cutting edge of management development."

What the participants have said:

"The experience at Roffey Park has definitely equipped me with valuable tools which I am confident will enable me to work in a more productive manner. Having the opportunity to meet so many different members of BAM gave me an excellent insight into the business which I am sure will lead to interesting opportunities in the future."

"It is difficult to over-estimate Roffey Park's impact on me personally and how I will use it to lead my teams to being highly effective and enjoy working with and for me."

"The programme was well structured and clearly communicated. The tutors were superb – very supportive but also challenging."

"The Advanced Manager Programme has been something that I will refer back to constantly throughout my career."



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