

# Succession planning at Calor

## Calor rolls out Talent Management programme with the help of Roffey Park.



### Introduction

Calor was formed in 1935 and is the UK's leading supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). It currently services around 4 million homes and businesses, supplying LPG to power gas appliances from central heating and hot water, to cookers, fires and barbecues. In the United Kingdom, Calor is part of the SHV Gas Group, a private Dutch company. With over 1,200 employees in the UK, Calor is the market leader in the industry. As such, it is constantly looking for ways to improve its performance and ensure it offers its customers the best service available.

### The challenge

Following an internal survey conducted by the HR department, Calor became aware that the vast majority of its senior managers have been with the company for many years. While this loyalty spoke volumes about the company's success, it also demonstrated that in ten years time there would be a shortage of new managerial talent. Since, Calor has a policy of recruiting at least 80% of its positions internally it needed to ensure there would be a range of suitable candidates to replace senior managers on their retirement. It wanted to equip its management team with the skills to cope with these future challenges.

"We wanted to implement a talent management succession programme to work with the top twelve managers outside the senior management team," explains Phil Alexander, Training and Development Manager, Calor. "This would allow us to prepare them with the necessary skills to move upward in the company as the most senior figures retire."

### The solution

Calor invited a number of organisations to pitch for the contract, including Roffey Park. Founded in 1946, Roffey Park is an executive education organisation which is internationally recognised for developing innovative learning approaches that enable individuals to achieve their full potential both at work and in their wider lives. Roffey Park's reputation within the personal development arena and experience in implementing talent management schemes impressed Calor and encouraged it to select Roffey Park as its partner in the new endeavour.

"From the outset, Roffey Park had an instinctive understanding of what we were trying to achieve," adds Phil. "The team's deep industry knowledge, combined with wide experience and a sterling reputation, made it an easy choice for Calor."

Calor and Roffey Park worked together to devise a talent management programme that would meet the needs of Calor now and in the future. Calor identified a number of key positions that are crucial to business success and then singled out two potential successors, suitable people to fill that role – one already equipped to step up to the role and one that would need development.

Attention was then turned towards how best to equip these employees with the necessary skills to succeed in a more senior position. Roffey Park and Calor implemented a Development Centre where twelve candidates would spend just over two days undertaking various activities geared towards improving key competencies. These competencies were jointly identified by Roffey Park and Calor and included leadership, change management, decision-making and strategic thinking.

"Each person begins with an aspiration interview to assess where they are in career terms and, more importantly, where they want to be. This is followed by active tests of everything from implementation skills to business awareness," explains Phil. "The second component of the Development





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Centre is a full 360 degree appraisal, which incorporates Myers-Briggs evaluation as well. After this, we write up the results and give individual feedback sessions to each participant where we outline a development plan and assign a personal coach. Depending on the seniority of the participant, this coach will either be an internal Calor HR member or, for the more senior ranks, one of Roffey Park's specialists."

The participants then meet with the coach four times over the course of the following year to review progress against the goals outlined in the development plan. In conjunction, there is also a talent panel, which includes the entire Calor board and reviews the individuals twice a year.

#### The results

Since its inception in 2007, the programme has been a resounding success. From the initial intake of participants, 60% have already been promoted and others have been assigned special projects as a result of their involvement with the programme. This initial success encouraged Calor to run the programme again the following year for another twelve participants.

"Some of the managers were a little apprehensive at first," admits Phil. "However, after completing the Development Centre, they really enter into it and appreciate the value it offers. These are senior employees who don't suffer fools gladly so it is a measure of Roffey Park's performance that their team was embraced and listened to so willingly."

With the talent management programme entering its third year, Calor and Roffey Park are continuing to work together to strengthen Calor's key executives' skills.

"Roffey Park has been exceptional in moving our business forward," concludes Phil Alexander. "I can't praise the team highly enough. Roffey Park quickly established credibility with the board by working jointly with them and offering excellent quality skills and excellent service. And, based on Roffey Park's performance to date, there is every chance that we will use them in the future and perhaps with other parts of our parent company, SHV."

For more information about Roffey Park's tailored development:

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