



SPECIALISTS IN  
PERFORMANCE  
MANAGEMENT

# Get really smart by ditching SMART objectives



*...because  
conversations  
matter!*



## The Challenge

How do you get 250 highly educated analysts with off-the-scale spreadsheet skills to grow the business through more focus on customers and collaboration?

### The context

When the CEO and HRD of a sophisticated analytical market intelligence company set out to create growth through a strategic change, they knew they would need to think differently about managing performance. Some years earlier, efforts to launch Performance Management had not taken hold, leaving the current HRD to face the facts:

- most senior people were not engaged
- the process was not aligned with business performance
- the process was not delivering for the business

Now the company needed a change in mindset to support a move from analysing and selling data to a consulting and business intelligence led strategy. The HRD knew a genuinely fresh approach was required.

### Call in the specialists – content more important than the form

3C were called in as Performance Management specialists to support a re-think.

Working closely with the Executive Team, 3C showed how a new approach could embed the strategy within Performance Management and help them deliver the results they were seeking. WHAT you talk about in performance really matters. There were many light bulb moments!



The resulting approach is employee-owned and focuses on having good quality, regular performance conversations – ‘check-ins’ – with the manager.

Crucially, the check-ins are structured around core Success Criteria – 7 themes everyone discusses at least three times a year, led by the employees and focused on both performance and development.

Training sessions for all employees and managers ensured everyone across the 10 global offices understood what is expected and how to make the check-in conversations a success.

**“When asked for the ‘one big takeaway’ over 50% referenced personal ownership or responsibility for performance, and a further 25% referenced a positive or solutions focus.”**

Analysis of training evaluations



## Engaging all employees with content and behaviour

3C developed and delivered half-day Forum Theatre workshops for everyone - managers and analysts alike. Forum Theatre uses actors in a 'theatre-based' scenario to explore the behaviours needed for great conversations, in this case - conversations about the Success Criteria.

It is a highly interactive experience, with delegates 'directing' the actors through a performance check-in meeting, ultimately steering it from a bad discussion to an excellent one. In the process, all employees are teaching themselves how to make the most of their own check-ins, leading also to them taking ownership of their role in delivering the strategy.

Global webinars were delivered for smaller groups using video material from the live theatre sessions, creating a widespread sense that the new Performance Management approach is genuinely for everyone.

## Supporting managers

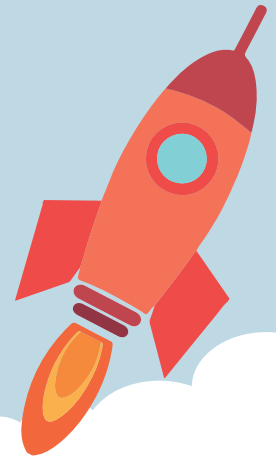
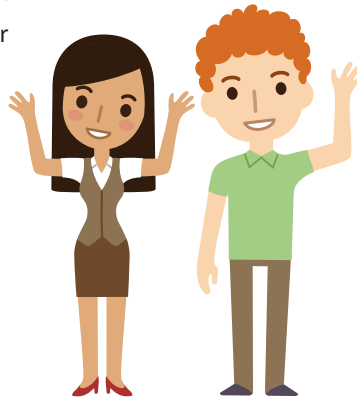
Alongside the Forum Theatre session, all managers were given a series of five half-day training modules: Preparing for the Check-In Conversation, Coaching Skills, Dealing with Performance Issues & Giving Feedback, Career Conversations, and Managing Remotely.

## 'Success Criteria' change perceptions as well as practice

The new approach moves away from setting individual 'SMART' goals to conversations focused on core 'Success Criteria.' Feedback from employees shows:

- people feel aligned with the things that REALLY matter to the business
- everyone is clear about what is being measured and how
- the Success Criteria are seen as important and relevant, so worth spending precious time on the simplified approach is thought to be fair, transparent and more consistent across the business.

The result - employees wanting their performance conversations, and taking their share of responsibility for making them a success.



**"Over 99% of participants would recommend the workshops to colleagues."**

Analysis of training evaluations

## "Very smart people may still struggle with talking about performance"

### What Hedda says:

The challenge here was not asking people to 'do a better spreadsheet', it was about helping employees think differently about what they were trying to achieve through their work.

The Success Criteria created a focus for talking about performance that engaged the attention and interest of this highly educated workforce.

Few of the managers or employees find talking about performance easy, but with this approach they now have a fresh perspective on what high performance looks like in their organisation, in a language that they feel comfortable using.



Hedda Bird, 3C Managing Director and Founder

## What our clients say

“I’m sure you’ve been overwhelmed with positive feedback but just in case you haven’t - this approach is great. The questions are appropriate, the rating is very clear, the time taken is small and the opportunity to discuss real business impact and performance is great. Well done to the team who put this together.”

Damien Marantelli, General Manager, Mining Operations. First Quantum Minerals Ltd

“Thank you for the expert work you and your colleagues at 3C have done to help set our objectives and implement our strategy. I did not fully appreciate the benefits until I saw how it has worked out this year. There has been visible change in focus. Much of the success was due to the clear and engaging way you presented the issues to senior staff.”

Professor Steven Cowley, CEO, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

“Well done! Great sessions which have made a real difference. The experiential nature of seeing and hearing the performance conversation taking place with the actors was a particular highlight for me...”

Guy Dickson, Head of Organisational Development, Plymouth City Council

## About 3C

As Performance Management specialists, 3C’s refreshing and energising approach is designed to address and resolve the key Performance Management issues that HR professionals face.

We work with organisations where managers tend to come from technical, professional or academic roles. We help technical experts become great people managers

Our unique 3-step approach is based on 15 years of experience, research and insight.

1. Jumpstart - engages your senior leaders in an intelligent re-evaluation of the purpose of Performance Management. Creative, stimulating and full-on light bulb moments!
2. Witty, interactive training and engagement for the workforce and managers - engaging even the most sceptical with not just what to do, but why do it.
3. The Frequent Feedback Platform embeds a culture of feedback and coaching for all.

**Contact 3C today to discuss how we can help**  
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