



SPECIALISTS IN  
PERFORMANCE  
MANAGEMENT

Case study

How to grow and keep your  
brightest and best

“The company was losing its brightest 25-35 year olds to the competition. No-one was told how much they were valued.”

This family-owned UK civil engineering and construction company of 1800 engineers knew it had to innovate to succeed in a highly competitive marketplace. So talent was key to their strategy. Yet the company was losing its brightest 25-35 year olds to the competition.

People didn't know they had been identified for fast-track development. No-one was told how much they were valued. The pressure was on for a small HR team to come up with a different approach and they asked 3C to help.

It didn't take long for 3C to find out why talent was leaving. With no structured and consistent appraisal programme in place, local managers were developing their own approaches which varied substantially in terms of what was measured and valued.

People were not getting feedback, development was haphazard and promotion was thought to be a matter of luck.

### Wide consultation helped get buy-in for a new approach

Realising their approach to performance and appraisal was not fit for purpose, the company asked 3C for a total re-design which would support their company strategy.

Working with a cross-functional team in a consultation process across the company, 3C developed a practical approach to assessing and comparing performance across roles, along with a standard approach to record potential for promotion and development.

These proposals were shared with regional and cross-functional focus groups to gain feedback.



### Board and Senior Leadership Team engagement was crucial

3C presented recommendations to the Board for the re-named Progress Reviews.

It was vital for the CEO to buy in to the need to engage all 1800 people in either Performance Management Training or an Employee Engagement session for the project to succeed. This meeting also provided the opportunity to iron out important details. For example, the Board was not keen on comparative ratings, thinking this would demotivate people. But feedback from the focus groups had confirmed that the workforce were keen to know how they compared to their peers.

## The new approach moves away from paternalism and towards accountability and autonomy

3C delivered Performance Management Training Workshops to 400 managers across the UK in mixed groups of up to 12 people. To underline the investment the company was making, and its commitment to the change in purpose, process and behaviours, a member of the regional leadership team was involved in presenting each workshop.

The workshops covered objective setting, coaching skills, poor performance and career development and gave managers a chance to experience best-practice behaviours.

All employees took part in Employee Engagement sessions which used forum theatre to ensure good quality two-way progress review conversations would become the norm.

To minimise disruption to the business, the performance management and employment engagement workshops were held on the same day – a logistical challenge but an effective use of people's time.

## 90% have had a progress review... - many for the first time ever

In the year since the project, over 90% of employees have had a progress review – many for the first time ever.

A process of 360 feedback is being rolled out from senior managers across the organisation. Feedback has been positive from all parts of the business.

People are surprised and pleased to discover how much care and attention the company is investing in their future.

## The workforce now has ownership of their own performance

Managers are more focused on providing career development opportunities for their best people. The process and the way it was implemented means every single person in the company now takes ownership of their own progress review. Meanwhile, managers' ability to hold high quality performance conversations that are valued by their teams, has been significantly improved.

The entire conversation around the subject of performance has been changed and this should feed through to higher performance and better talent retention and development.



“Giving Senior Managers the ‘big picture’ on how performance management could secure the commitment of their best people was key to the success of this project.”

### 3C insight – Hedda says:

The key for this client was to give Senior Managers a ‘big picture’ perspective into how honest and open performance management could be the route to secure the commitment of their best people, whilst acknowledging that not everyone's desires for advancement can be met.

This led to the creation of clear, practical promotion criteria, understood by the whole workforce, which was embedded into a new, much more consistent, open and honest approach to progress reviews than experienced before.

The power of the ‘big picture’ transformed the organisation's view of performance reviews from an irrelevant ‘chore,’ to a challenging but important aspect of running the business, which has a direct impact on the effectiveness of their strategy.



Hedda Bird, 3C Managing Director and Founder



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"We saw a marked difference with all our people. Our managers and employees are now more enthused and motivated, and there is a real drive to get their Performance Reviews done - and done effectively."

*Victoria Wilkins, HR Business Partner,  
Land Securities plc*

"...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*

"3C has enabled Iron Mountain to transform Performance Management from being a form-filling exercise into a value added activity that is seen to fundamentally drive engagement, commitment and overall business performance."

*Rachel Greenway, Leadership Development Manager, Iron Mountain Europe*

Since 2001, 3C has been helping HR professionals create high-performing organisations.

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.

- Engaging your senior leadership team
- Providing your managers with skills and knowledge for effective performance reviews
- Enabling your people to take ownership of their own performance.

Contact 3C today to discuss how we can help:

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