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The Difference that makes the Difference

Case Study

Modelling Retail Excellence

Modelling Process
conducted on behalf of
The Body Shop





Introduction and
Background to
the project

The Body Shop International plc is a values driven, high quality skin and body care retailer operating in 50 countries with over 1,900 outlets spanning 25 languages and 12 time zones.

Famous for creating a niche market sector for naturally inspired skin and hair care products, The Body Shop introduced a generation of consumers to the benefits of a wide range of best sellers from Vitamin E Moisture Cream to the Tea Tree Oil range and Banana Shampoo.

It is estimated that The Body Shop sells a product every 0.4 seconds with over 77 million customers transactions through stores worldwide, with customers sampling the current range of over 600 products and more than 400 accessories.

*In 1999 **The Body Shop** brand was voted the second most trusted brand in the UK by the Consumers Association. According to the 1997 Interbrand survey criteria, the company was named 28th top brand in the world, second in the retail sector. In a 1998 report, a survey of international chief executives in The Financial Times ranked The Body Shop the 27th most respected company in the world.*

(extract from The Body Shop website <http://www.thebodyshop.com>) © 2003 The Body Shop International PLC

The Body Shop believes that any business is primarily about human relationships. They believe that the more the focus of the business remains on their relationships with their customers, their stakeholders and their staff and involving them in decision making, the better the business will run.

The Body Shop invests in its people as the vehicle for enabling the organisation to meet its business, social and environmental objectives. There are specific issues with the training and retention of motivated staff in the retail arena in general. The Body Shop, having created a new breed of socially aware retail company, recognised the need for innovation in its approach to these issues and embarked upon an extensive overhaul of its training and development functions. The involvement of our consultants was in response to this need and this has been explicitly stated as an on-going focus of the company.

Mark Barrett **HR Director of The Body Shop** states...

...A key performance target for the business is to strengthen our learning and development programmes for store-based employees. Our aim is to develop skills that will deliver excellent customer service and improve employee retention. Employee turnover continues to be an issue across the retail sector in general. A continuing priority for The Body Shop is to identify and address the critical factors that influence employee turnover in our stores. We will also focus on developing the skills of our middle and senior managers to help drive performance and achieve optimum business success.

Underpinning this strategy is the need for all employees to engage in our retail vision, as well as our social and environmental mission. I believe our employees have a crucial role to play in helping The Body Shop to achieve its long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability.

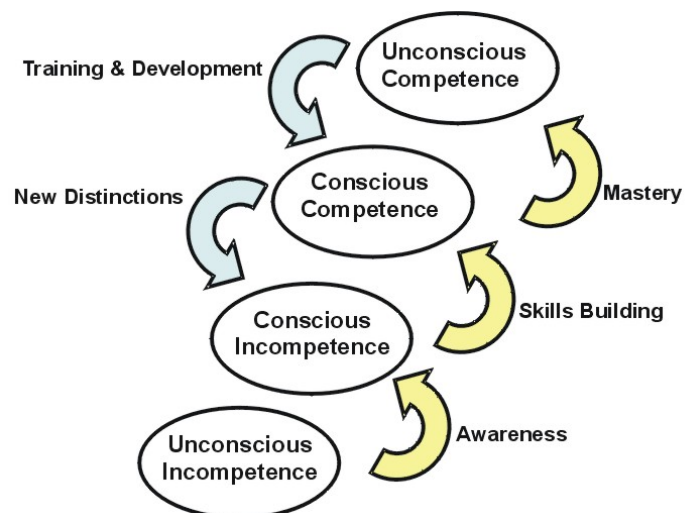
(extract from The Body Shop website <http://www.thebodyshop.com>) © 2003 The Body Shop International PLC

What is Modelling Modelling is a natural process. It is one that we all engage in as we develop in our lives; children model. They model everything. From walking and talking to tying their shoes to riding a bike. They model those who are influential around them. Everyone. Their carers, their siblings, their educators and from those they model they learn the skills that will assist them in each stage of their life.

As adults, we continue to model, observing those who seem to know what they are doing and either copying them or adapting what they do to fit us and our way of working. There is a body of evidence from the US that suggests that up to 80% of the information we gather on how to get the job done is learned by informal methods – observation, trial and error, informal coaching – in a word modelling.

The modelling process is a refinement of this natural process using proven NLP modelling techniques (Neuro Linguistic Programming). It formalises the process and enables those who are *'the best of the best'* (Exemplars) to understand, not just what they do (standard training fare) but how specifically they do it. Ask most considered 'expert' in their field *'how they are what they are'* and *'how they do what they do'*. Invariably the reply will be a surface level answer that, whilst answering the question, will not provide detail information of how you can do it.

Our modelling process enables exemplars to realise their potential by fully understanding what they do at a level of unconscious competence. It also allows us to construct a model of those competencies that any individual, motivated to emulate an exemplar, can learn.



The Body Shop Solution

The Body Shop initially engaged our consultant with a view to training their internal training team in aspects of NLP. The audience for these training events were those responsible for Management Development, Product Training and Retail Sales Trainers. This programme was rolled out and the information and techniques then applied to the existing trainings within the organisation. Further training solutions were also defined based on the new perspective offered by NLP training.

A further need was identified which related to the training and retention of front line sales staff. It was recognised that some sales operatives were highly successful in their interactions with clients whilst others were less so. Our consultant recommended a modelling process, taking a sample of 10 of 'the best of the best' of The Body Shop's customer services/sales operatives.

We recommended a pilot exercise, restricting the initial stores involved to 5, with a recommendation of rollout once the process had proven successful. The Body Shop embarked on identification of their best people and we were able to model the required 10 individuals. Once this stage had been completed, we were able to construct a working model that was then presented back to the stakeholders within the organisation. We then worked with their internal training staff to define a knowledge transfer process that met with their very specific requirements and situation.

The retail sales environment is one where there can be very little down time for training. Each store has very few staff on the bench as staffing levels are matched as closely to store operating requirements and so the opportunity to take staff off line is limited. Their standard method for dissemination of information is through 'staff briefing sessions' and corporate video (known as BSTV).

We identified two knowledge transfer methods. The first was to utilise the existing accepted method of corporate video as a means for highlighting behavioural excellence. This was recommended as a means of sharing the model once it had been successfully piloted. However, we believed that this alone was not sufficient to deliver the significant benefits that we would expect from this process and so the second vehicle for behavioural and performance development was identified as the management staff in each of the pilot locations. They were trained in coaching skills and awareness of the model and tasked to coach all staff members as the programme moved forward.

In a sales environment, and specifically in The Body Shop's FMCG environment, the success of this process could be measured in increased sales. The issue was that at this time sales were not broken down by individual sales operative in each pilot store, however, working with The Body Shop we defined a method of assessing sales increase based on their historical measurements. The Body Shop looked at sales variation by comparison against each pilot store's previous year's sales by month factoring in national average increases and also comparison for model stores versus non-model stores.

The Body Shop

There was seen to be a significant difference between the model stores

Solution
(continued)

and those that had not been included in the initial pilot, therefore The Body Shop elected to roll the programme out to its remaining stores and to recommend the inclusion and investment from its franchise stores.

We worked with The Body Shop's internal training team to define the content of the BSTV video and also trained their internal coaching team on the specific skills we had passed on to the managers within the pilot stores to enable internal trainers to take on the role of delivering future coaching training to all Body Shop managers.

Our consultant handed over both the model and the skills to imbed, coach and develop the model to Body Shop training staff to enable the organisation to run with the programme. As we can see from the recent statement by Mark Barrett, HR Director of The Body Shop, earlier in this document, the development of excellent store based employees that *'...will deliver excellent customer service'* continues to be a primary focus of The Body Shop.