

Delivering to DHL

Helping DHL build a team
of new Business Partners.

ORION CASE STUDY



ORION
Transforming HR

Helping DHL build a team of new Business Partners

You're a big organisation – 45,000 people across the UK. You're undertaking a major transformation in your HR function, moving to an Ulrich model, and now you've got to assess, select and develop a whole new team of Business Partners. You need them to step away from their familiar HR transactional roles and become strategic partners to the business.

How do you do it?

It's all about mindset and attitudes.

One HR

“We wanted to transform the HR function from a series of quite autonomous teams into something more centralised. With centres of excellence, shared services and a DHL version of the Ulrich model.”

Huw Jones, HR Transformation Project Lead

DHL Supply Chain provides the outsourced logistics for companies like M&S, Unilever and the NHS. When you see lorries with M&S on the side, it’s actually DHL Supply Chain. Overall they employ about 45,000 people in the UK. Two years ago, they decided they needed to transform the way HR supported this business.

As part of this transformation, they decided to adopt an Ulrich-style HRBP model. As a result they needed someone to work with them and help define what that meant for DHL, and help their new HR Business Partners prepare for the demands of their new role.

That someone was us.

Tried and tested, research based

Helping new BPs prepare for the strategic demands of their new role is something we've done many times before, and for some of the world's leading organisations. This combined with our own extensive research into what makes great HR people great gives us unique insight into how best to help develop the right skills and behaviours.

Because a key part of what we do is to help companies transform their whole HR delivery model, we also understood DHL's wider challenge and the tensions that their new team of HRBPs would face in an organisation moving to a new way of working. All valuable context.

Ulrich – DHL style

So what did we do? Well, while there is a well established theory of the 'right HR' model, we're firm believers that every organisation needs to develop a delivery model to work for them. So that's where we started.

Of course, when you bring HR leaders together from very different business divisions to decide what their BPs should and shouldn't be doing in the future, it's not easy! Particularly when the 'new world' means BPs stepping away from the transactional stuff they're used to, a perception of a potential loss of control.

Still, we got together with DHL's senior HR and management teams to work through exactly what their new BPs would and wouldn't be doing in their new world – combining what they believed would be important with what we knew was important from our research and experience.

"We had a great discovery workshop, walking through different scenarios, saying what happens now then working through what would happen in the new world. Working through that process was really important. And Orion's external perspective was invaluable."

Huw Jones, HR Transformation Project Lead

Building mindsets and behaviours

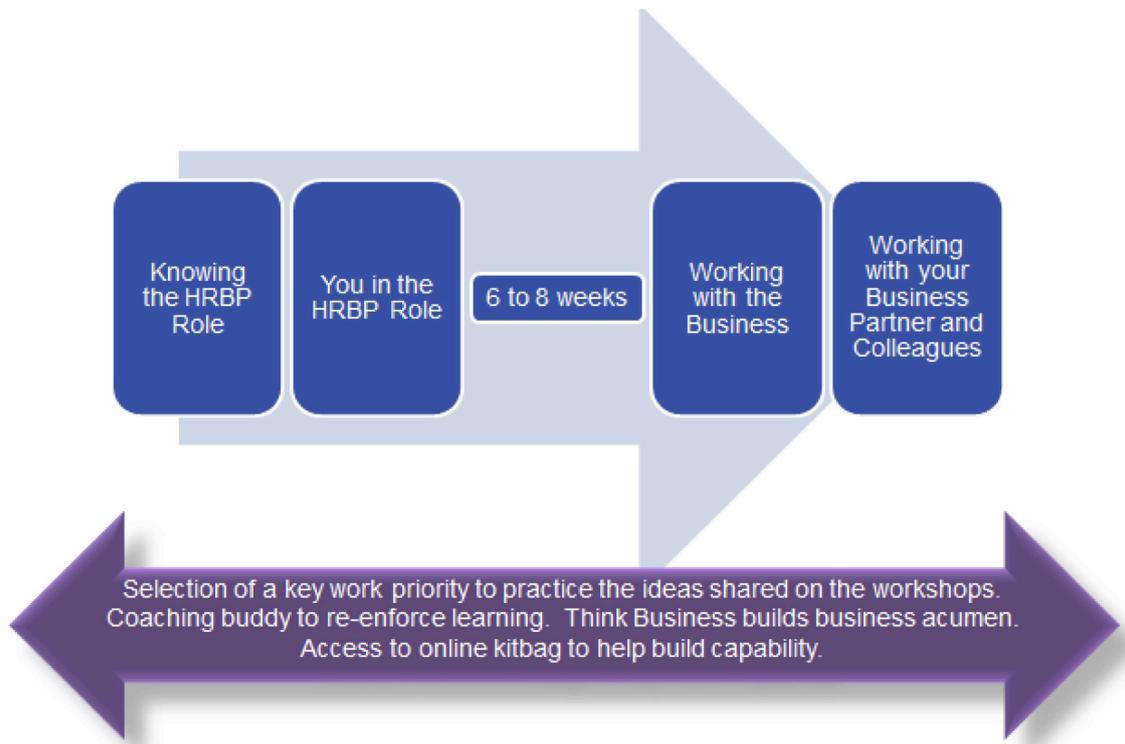
Once we'd defined the role that HRBPs would be doing in the future at DHL, our next job was to put together a comprehensive development programme to roll out across the whole of the UK.

While the programme touched on the technical capabilities future BPs would need, the real focus was on the mindset and attitudes they'd need to develop to be successful in their new role: how they

think about themselves, their role in the business and their relationship with the rest of HR function.

We created a blended development programme designed around two face-to-face and one online bespoke business simulation module.

HR Transformation - DHL HR Business Partner Development Programme



For Business Partners, by Business Partners

“We believe one of the big differences between generic management training and what we provide is our facilitators’ in-depth understanding of what HR people experience in real life.”

Jane Chesters, Orion Partners

Unlike generic management training, we put together a programme that really got HR people to experience the same emotions and pressures they’re going to feel when they’re actually on the job. We also made sure our team were in a position to talk about these situations with the credibility that comes from experience. They have lived and breathed the realities of life in the role as well as helping develop these skills in a hugely diverse range of organisations – from luxury retail and financial services through to rail infrastructure and consumer goods.

Self Sufficiency

For us it's really important that if an organisation's training programme is to be successful, they have to take ownership and drive it. So as well as running the workshops ourselves, we also gradually trained DHL HR people to deliver the programme.

First we would run the session with them supporting – then gradually switch roles. This was one of the particular success stories from the whole project. It means training sessions can now be run without us being there all the time! But it also helped several DHL HR people really shine in this training role.

The Results

We're delighted with what's happened at DHL. The people who've gone through our training are new to their role. The focus has been a lot around the individual, confidence and their right to have a different conversation, and this has really made a difference.

Feedback from the floor:

"The workshop went right down to what it meant for me as a person – things I had to change about the way I think to be a good Business Partner. That really worked well. And working through examples so I could feel it, touch it, practice it. That was better than just the theory."

"Challenging and informative. It's up to me now!"

"A great balance of presentation (no PowerPoint!), interaction and activities."

"The combination of theory and practice was really useful – it made me realise just how much I need to change."

"A great opportunity to reflect on ourselves and as a team. Good to do it as a team – it has brought us closer together in our thinking."