

Creative Outplacement Case Studies



PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES - 1

Case studies for:

- SmithKline Beecham Consumer Healthcare
- Lloyds Bank plc
- Clifford Chance
- Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd

The Changing World of Work

Introduction

This case study would not have been possible had it not been for the faith placed in the TDA Counselling Services Team and we are grateful to all four clients for their trust and support. We also extend our appreciation to the many other clients with whom we have worked since 1984 in this specialist area. All these experiences have shaped our outplacement service and have led us to develop new services to meet the needs of a rapidly changing work environment.

The Changing World of Work Series focuses on the key areas in which we have been involved since launching the TDA concept in the early '80s:

- Counselling (outplacement, career management and counsellor skills training)
- Training and Development
- Change Management

During our 19 years in the market, over 20,000 executives and non-executives at all levels have been through our Counselling programmes. We have developed our own unique Counselling at Work Diploma in conjunction with Roehampton Institute, through which we have set new professional standards for our counsellors. We have also achieved two National Training Awards and have developed a range of niche services. Our portfolio now includes:

- The Entrepreneur Development Programme. Over 1,200 individuals have now worked through this business start-up experience. Research during the 1990s indicated that, of the 80% who went on to set up, we had only a 7% failure rate, compared to the national average of 40% for the same five year period.
- "Wellbeing" - a fresh response to stress management and personal development.
- "3D" - an innovative approach to career management, including concepts such as lifestyle and workstyle management.

The four case studies that follow highlight the partnership approach we always follow and the standards of personal care that we aspire to achieve. Although all are unique in requirement, the common points are:

- High levels of customer service and value for money
- Thorough planning and communications, whether for individuals or group support programmes

- Tailored counselling and training solutions, supported by quality materials
- Regular feedback on activity and results
- The thoroughness of our counselling and coaching, in particular the way in which we impart life skills, flexibility and confidence to look at a wide range of career options
- The way we treat everyone as an individual.

For further details, or a confidential discussion on our creative approaches, please contact:

Chris Dunn
Chief Executive

Tackling Shop-Floor Scepticism

Scepticism about finding “new” jobs in Merseyside was one hurdle TDA faced when SmithKline Beecham* called them in on closing its factory

It was 3rd March, 1994 in St Helen's, Merseyside - the day SmithKline Beecham, one of the town's largest employers, announced the closure of its factory there - which meant redundancy for 432 workers.

On the local radio morning news programme, Pat McLoughlin, a production line supervisor and shop steward at the factory, was in no doubt that the money SmithKline Beecham was spending on outplacement could be put to better use. This was one of the country's worst unemployment blackspots, she argued; how could TDA create jobs that just weren't there? "There's one thing that will convince me I'm wrong," she said, "and that's if you can get *me* a job!"

Specialised Knowledge

"Initially, there was a lot of scepticism when we involved TDA," admitted Steve Gange, Human Resources Manager at SmithKline Beecham in St Helen's. "Shop floor workers are not used to being given outplacement counselling and training and that was one of the main reasons why we chose TDA. They have a very 'shop floor' approach, and have got right away from the idea that outplacement is only for managers. I was also impressed that they could offer consultants - like Mike Elworthy - with previous experience in FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) and another - David Walsh - who was a native of the St Helen's area. Their specialised knowledge was the key to the success of the programme."

Tackling the scepticism of the workforce was one of the first and most important tasks and TDA adopted a high profile from the start, giving all members of the workforce a short presentation of their services the day after the closure announcement. "This was a first for us - to be put in front of the workforce at such an early stage," said Mike Elworthy "but it proved to be a very good move. From that moment, we weren't just faceless consultants. People knew we were human beings."

On-Site Support

Within a few days of the closure being announced, TDA had already set up its on-site support centre staffed by five fully qualified consultants.

Within six weeks, everyone working in the factory had been offered - and in 98% of cases given - an hour's individual counselling session and had had CVs written for them by the staff at the centre.

**Now GlaxoSmithKline*

TDA conducted a wide-ranging mailshot to all employers within a 30-mile radius of St Helen's. Letters were addressed to Human Resources Managers personally - the names and addresses having been researched by the TDA team. Each letter was followed up a few days later with a telephone call. TDA also combed the local press for jobs and set up a link with the local Job Centre. Daily bulletins were posted up throughout the factory site with lists of jobs as they became available.

A Full Service

Once TDA had assessed each individual's needs and aspirations, a full job search service was provided: tracking down suitable jobs, helping the candidate write a letter of application, arranging interview appointments and following up applications. Candidates were also given training in interview techniques.

Such was the success of TDA's job search programme that people started finding alternative employment before they were due to leave the factory. SmithKline Beecham and TDA had to put the programme into 'overdrive', with TDA remaining on site permanently, and SmithKline Beecham letting people leave as and when they got suited. "This meant a lot more effort on the part of TDA," said Steve Gange. "It's a measure of their flexibility that they were able to cope so well".

TDA's support programme began in March 1994. By the beginning of October, out of the 432 working at the factory when the programme began, 208 had already left. The great majority of them (149) went on to other jobs - mostly found for them by TDA - and all within a 30 mile radius of St Helen's. Seven people went on to higher education courses at the local St Helen's College, and six were relocated to other sites. Fifteen retired or left through ill health.

Amongst those who found a new job was Pat McLoughlin, the sceptical shop steward. She became a supervisor with another local factory, with better pay and more responsibility. She was quite happy to admit she was wrong about outplacement. "I think my first reaction was quite understandable. We've seen so many people thrown out of work up here without a finger being raised to help them - so why should this have been any different? But it was - and I'm very pleased, not only for myself but also for all the people who were found work through the support programme".

Creating Options for Career Change

When Lloyds Bank started to rationalise its branches network, it chose TDA to provide counselling and training for 200 managers. They were offered the choice between career change, self-marketing or self-employment to support them as they redirected their career.

In 1992 Lloyds Bank embarked on a major regrouping of its branches with the prospect that 200 junior to middle managers would leave the bank by voluntary redundancy. Losing this number of staff all at once was a new experience for the bank and for the staff involved, and it was decided to use the expertise of an outplacement consultancy.

Lloyds Bank wanted not simply a consultancy that could do the job, but one that could produce a programme that reflected the bank's particular needs and culture. "We needed to have confidence in the people who *were* the consultancy," said Laurie Penny, Senior Manager, Selection and Appointment Services at Lloyds Bank. "After meeting TDA Transitions, I knew they were the right people to help our people."

Morale Boosting

The bank recognised that the morale of their managers would be seriously affected by redundancy - even though it was voluntary - but needed them to continue to perform their jobs well until the day they left. The programme had to be an important morale-booster for them, demonstrating that the bank still held them in respect and took their concerns seriously.

TDA's counsellors had experience in the financial services sector and spent time getting to know Lloyds Bank and the way it operated. Thus TDA was able to devise a programme aimed specifically at the junior and middle echelons of bank management. These managers had little or no experience of looking for a new job, never having expected - or wanted - to do so. They were also unlikely to find another job in a bank - at least at their level - since most other banks were engaged in similar rationalisation programmes. They would have to take a hard look at their existing skills, to repackage them, or to consider a fresh start to their careers.

Programme Options

The programme provided a three-stage service:

1. An initial two-hour counselling session concentrating on immediate issues and identifying the individual's needs;
2. Then a three-day training programme offering a choice between self-marketing (a practical approach to selling the candidate's services in the job market); entrepreneur development (a preparation for self-employment or setting up a small business); or the career options review (a re-examination of the individual's skills and capacities with a view to fundamental career change);
3. Finally a one-day follow-up session dealing with any outstanding issues, and providing advice on direction, motivation and encouragement.

The TDA programme encouraged participants to reassess their aspirations and to examine how they might repackage their skills. For example, two former managers who both took part in the programme realised that their backgrounds were ideally suited to providing financial and administrative services for the fund-holding GPs in the National Health Service - a career change that has proved successful for both of them. Another, who attended TDA's Entrepreneur Development Programme, developed an idea for providing business advice to clients hoping to approach their banks with borrowing proposals. He went on to run a successful business consultancy.

Success Rates

The bank's own follow-up research showed that 75% of those who attended the programme found alternative employment, changed careers or went on to further training or education within 6 months of leaving the bank.

"At Lloyds, we have a very high expectation of our managers' abilities," said Laurie Penny. After a few years with us they will have acquired an enormous number of different skills. TDA's programme made people articulate those skills and to see how they could be used in a totally different context; and many of them realised there was an exciting and challenging life outside the bank".

Counselling the Professions to Seek Pastures New

"What really counts is that we don't just 'drop' people when they leave us: too many firms do just that. We are concerned to give our people every assistance, even when they're leaving us; and TDA enables us to do that in an effective way."

**Alistair Dawson, Head of Personnel,
Clifford Chance**

Solicitors' firms do not, as a rule, conduct wholesale redundancy programmes. Nevertheless, in a firm the size of Clifford Chance there is bound to be some movement of labour - and not all of it is voluntary.

"People who are not partnership material can very often get shunted into the sidings in a large firm, where their skills slowly atrophy and cease to be of use either to the firm or to them," explained Alistair Dawson, Head of Personnel at Clifford Chance. "Rather than let that happen, we think it is better to be honest with them and suggest they try and make a career for themselves elsewhere."

The recession has not left the legal profession unscathed. As legal firms seek to sharpen their competitive edge, jobs are much harder to find. Alistair Dawson therefore brought in TDA Transitions to set up a structured programme of counselling and training to help those leaving the firm.

An Individual Service

"I chose TDA mainly because their operation was the right size for what I had in mind," said Alistair Dawson. "TDA treats each candidate as a person and ensures that they see the same counsellor throughout. What we need here above all is *individual* counselling and training."

The programme TDA devised offered six modules or sessions per participant at TDA's head office in Brentford after an introductory meeting to establish the candidate's background. The first two sessions covered career options and objectives, establishing a personality profile, understanding and assessing the candidate's values, skills, interests and achievements and the preparation of a CV. The next two sessions concentrated on the practical aspects of applying for and getting a job: putting together a self-marketing plan, writing letters of application, finding out where to look for jobs, presentation at interviews and interview practice. The last two sessions provided the opportunity to review and revise the marketing plan, brush-up on interview techniques and learn techniques for negotiating job offers.

Confidential Counselling

All counselling was confidential and took place on a one-to-one basis. Peter Pearson, (then Head of Counselling Services), believed this was vital given the sensitive situations that were often encountered. "Being made redundant is never a pleasant experience and it's doubly hard when effectively you're being told you haven't made the grade."

The TDA counsellors had a broad range of experience - though not particularly in the legal world. This was partly deliberate: Clifford Chance was keen to encourage candidates to think beyond the confines of the legal profession when considering their next career move and TDA made a point in the counselling process of showing how legal skills could be repackaged and utilised in new fields.

After attending the programme, one solicitor took up a post as head of the property department of a local authority; another gained a permanent position with a pension fund; while a third went into partnership with a colleague to set up an IT consultancy.

"From our point of view, TDA's programme is successful in that everyone leaving the firm gets suited in some way or another," said Alistair Dawson. "What really counts is that we don't just 'drop' people when they leave us: too many firms do just that. We are concerned to give our people every assistance, even when they're leaving us; and TDA enables us to do that in an effective way."

Avoiding Confrontation

By working closely with management unions and workforce, TDA generated widespread support for its counselling, job search and training services.

"TDA took the trouble to find out how we functioned as a company, and did not attempt simply to apply formulae they had used elsewhere. What everybody liked about them was that they treated each person in the company as an individual."

**Ron Pearce,
Personnel Executive, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited**

In the world-wide recession of the early 1990s, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited faced extinction. To survive, it had to cut its workforce by half. The initial wave of voluntary redundancies took place during 1991 and this was the first occasion the company had used outplacement consultants for a programme of this size. "We wanted to have a properly structured programme," said Vic Harris, the Personnel Services Manager, "partly to cushion the blow to the workforce, but also because we believed it would be the most effective way of encouraging people to take voluntary severance."

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited chose TDA Transitions Limited to devise and run the outplacement programme. TDA's first task was to establish the true nature of the job market in Crewe and the surrounding area. They systematically made contact with all local employers, informing them of the redundancy programme and indicating what skills the workforce had available. A close relationship was established with local Job Centres and other agencies involved in the employment market. TDA was thus able to counter the prevailing view amongst the workforce that there were no jobs. The only real problem was knowing where to find them.

Flexible and Efficient

It was necessary to implement the redundancy programme quickly to stem the company's mounting losses and cash incentives were used to persuade people to leave by a certain date. In many cases, workers were selected for redundancy on a Monday and left the company on Friday of the same week. TDA therefore had two additional problems to contend with: first, the counselling and job search training had to take place within a short space of time; and second, individuals who had left might be unaware of TDA's services and unwilling to come back to the factory site once they had gone.

Throughout the redundancy programme, TDA operated from two on-site support centres. The centres were open to those in the process of leaving and to those who had already left. They had their own entrances on to the street so that former employees would not have to enter the factory site if they did not wish to. The support centre staff contacted every member of the workforce taking redundancy to tell them about the services available at the centres, provided them with an information pack and offered individual and confidential counselling sessions. In addition, TDA followed up many of those who had already left with telephone calls and, in some cases, house-to-house visits.

Working in Partnership

TDA worked alongside Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited's own personnel staff in providing counselling, job search services and training. This gave TDA the benefit of the in-house team's knowledge of individual people, who they were, what they did, any particular problems they had. It also lent the support operation credibility in the eyes of the workforce.

The unions were also very supportive of TDA's outplacement programme. In fact, one of their former works convenors, George Ellis, was permanently stationed at the support centres as part of the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited team.

"It was one of the most worthwhile jobs I've done," said George Ellis. "In the past when we had redundancies, there was no help, no-one to turn to. I was able, working with TDA, to provide the practical help these people needed. And I like to think that, because they saw me involved in it, it made them think this wasn't all a put-up job by the management".

Contact with Employers

So successful was the work of the support centre that local employers were soon telephoning regularly with job offers or with requests for workers with particular skills. "We had one firm call us," remembers George Ellis "who wanted half a dozen CNC machinists. In the end, not only did they take twelve of them, but offered them better shifts and a pay rise before they'd even started. Skilled Rolls-Royce employees are very highly thought of!"

Others, with advice from TDA, went on to set up their own businesses using their existing skills and are now contracting their services out to their former employer. One man even got a job as a French polisher through the support centre, because George happened to know it was his hobby.

"From the outset, TDA was perceived by both management and workforce as a professional organisation," said Ron Pearce, Personnel Executive. "Above all, they took the trouble to find out how we functioned as a company and did not attempt simply to apply formulae they had used elsewhere. What everybody liked about them was that they treated each person in the company as an individual."