

case study

Faber Learning suite of online courses provides flexible blended learning solution for improving performance

Faber & Faber began working with Nelson Croom early in 2005 on a pilot scheme to run four online courses with workshops running alongside for some of their managers.

Often touted as the last of the great independent publishing houses in London, Faber is currently enjoying success with a range of award-winning poetry and fiction titles. After recent growth, they now have a team of over 70, including 20 managers.

The problem

As Faber have expanded, the demands on the managers and their teams have increased. Everyone was highly committed and working hard, but they were concerned that they weren't always pulling in the same direction. They realised that they needed to take a more systematic approach to managing performance. To do this they not only needed to adopt the right system but they also had to get the managers on board.

They knew that managers would be concerned that any training and development was flexible. Ideally, they would be able to access courses when it suited them, ensuring that their jobs remained the priority and they didn't have to waste time travelling to and from courses.

Faber also wanted to find an approach to development that could be piloted and then rolled out to the management team for a range of courses.

The solution

Nelson Croom worked with the Faber & Faber team, developing a solution that would provide the flexibility they were looking for.

This also involved an initial intervention to ensure it created a significant change in behaviour. The result was a blended solution. For the development, the team selected four courses from the Nelson Croom Publishing Portfolio:

- Leadership Skills
- Coaching Skills
- Managing From Within the Team
- Conducting Performance Appraisals

“*Thank you for all your efforts in putting together and delivering such a fantastic workshop. I've had some very positive feedback (and threats of punishment to me for making staff do role plays!) I think we can safely say both workshops were a huge success and I know it has given the delegates a lot to think about*”

*Fran Ryba,
HR Consultant – Faber & Faber*

Nelson Croom then tailored the content to ensure that it would engage the managers and to ensure that the programme would be culturally appropriate. They paid particular attention to the language, avoiding all management jargon and positioning the concepts to make them acceptable by showing how they supported objectives the team had already bought into.

The two parts of the blended solution were then brought together by identifying specific modules for the managers to complete prior to the workshops. Activities were

selected that would gather the opinions and ideas of the participants. The facilitator used these to adapt the workshop to meet specific needs and to produce handouts to stimulate discussion. It was decided that the online resource would be called Faber Learning.

The second half of the solution was the development of a two day workshop focused on developing the team's abilities to put the concepts into action. After all this planning the project team thought the programme needed something extra to give it impact so one final piece of theatre was included. Two actors were employed to work with the groups on the workshop to bring the problems to life and to practise handling difficult people.

The results

The new programme was launched in April 2005. To date all members of the management team have undertaken some if not all of the courses available. As a result of the success of the pilot, further courses have subsequently been rolled out for the whole company.

