

## case study

## Recruitment, selection and performance review process improved through blended learning solution at Blackwell Publishing

In July 2005 Blackwell Publishing approached Nelson Croom to ask for help in creating a flexible and effective approach to developing performance management skills. Blackwell Publishing is an international academic and professional publisher of books and journals in the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, law, medicine and life sciences. They have offices in the UK, Europe, US and Asia and wanted to find a training solution for the managers with their UK and Europe office of 600 staff.

### The problem

The team at Blackwell had identified two needs: they were launching a new annual performance and development review (PDR) system and needed to provide training for all managers; they wanted a new approach to recruitment and selection training.

For the PDR project in particular, they needed all managers to understand the new process and for those new to appraisals, or lacking confidence, to get help with the soft skills. They didn't want the more experienced and competent managers to have to sit through a whole course again. In both cases they wanted a solution that would provide a complete development programme initially and also enable managers to get a refresher course months later when they were conducting a review or hiring a new team member but had forgotten some of the detail.

### The solution

Nelson Croom worked with the HR team at Blackwell, starting with two existing online courses:

*Conducting Performance and Development Reviews and Recruitment and Selection.*

These courses were selected from the Publishing Portfolio of courses created by Nelson Croom for the publishing industry. It was decided that the courses would be blended with face-to-face workshops to create a rich and engaging learning experience designed to inform staff about Blackwell's processes, to change their behaviours and to raise their skill levels.

The Blackwell project team worked with Nelson Croom to ensure the courses were tailored and customised for Blackwell and they chose a name for the online learning resource: Blackwell Delphi. The team added relevant content and examples to ensure that learners would find the courses engaging, and removed any potential barriers to acceptance – inappropriate job titles or department names.

### The results

The new PDR system was due in December, so it was important that the courses were available and ready to use by early October. Nelson Croom knows how to make tailoring existing courses a streamlined process and so were able to ensure that both courses were launched together on 7 October to create maximum impact.

The feedback from learners has been universally positive and Blackwell have now extended the number of Publishing Portfolio courses available, adding *Employment Law, Introduction to Publishing* and a bespoke course called *Blackwell Company Values*. Nelson Croom are now working with them to turn Delphi into a learning and development portal for the organisation as a whole.

Learners will be able to plan their own development and that of their team, analysing their needs, submitting learning requirements online and reviewing a complete catalogue of courses, resources and trainer profiles. Post course online questionnaires will ensure that feedback is collected in a more systematic way and that they can analyse the feedback on different areas of provision.

“ At Blackwell Publishing, we were looking for a flexible option to develop our training so that we could tailor courses specifically for our company. Nelson Croom are passionate about training and understand the needs of our industry. They were responsive and easy to work with, did what they said they would and were collaborative throughout the project. They were also fun to work with! ”

Dawn Bova, Director of Human Resources  
– Blackwell Publishing

