

# Dell *identifies its management gaps* with SHL

## The background

Dell Computer Corporation is the world's leading direct computer systems company. It is ranked number three and the fastest growing among all major computer systems companies worldwide, with 17,800 employees around the globe. It is a young company but a successful one, started in 1984, today Dell is a \$15.2 billion dollar company. Much of Dell's success depends on its employees, admits Lisa Farthing, Human Resources Manager. The investment Dell puts into its staff is demonstrated by the recent amount of development centres.

In total four different levels of development centre were cascaded down the UK organisation from senior management, sales management and account managers to telephone selling staff across all functions.

## The challenge

Succession planning had been limited with senior management. Dell needed to know if individuals had the right depth and breadth of skills for senior management. Before the first development centre was run, Dell had used a long standing 'wheel' of 36 competencies. The first step was for Dell and SHL to examine these to see which made a real difference in performance.

Ten critical competencies for success were identified with the softer competencies, e.g. resilience, motivation and tenacity being key.

In terms of the sales staff, Dell had experienced difficulties both attracting and retaining individuals. Lisa Farthing comments: "It's a perennial problem in our market. Everyone is competing for a small pool of highly skilled people. This is especially true of account managers. The ideal job candidates have both the sales skills and the product knowledge, but finding a candidate with both is not easy, and if it's a choice between sales skills and product knowledge, we'll always go for sales skills as we can always train staff in product knowledge."

*"We've seen staff attrition rates reduce, people see the company as investors in people. All individuals have found their feedback very useful and are very positive about working on their development plans. We've got succession plans in place and have a much longer term view. Training needs have been tackled in a customised manner with individual specific programs."*

*Lisa Farthing, Dell*



### The solution

Each centre lasted two days and included a group exercise, in-tray exercise, verbal and numerical tests, OPQ and analysis presentation exercise.

All individuals then received a half day face to face feedback session by Dell and SHL consultants as well as a written report on their competencies. Each individual then sets up a meeting with their line manager to share their main development points and discuss development activities.

### The results

So what benefits have Dell seen following these centres? Lisa Farthing comments: "We've seen staff attrition rates reduce, people see the company as investors in people. All individuals have found their feedback very useful and are very positive about working on their development plans. We've got succession plans in place and have a much longer term view. Training needs have been tackled in a customised manner with individual specific programs."

And in terms of the future? "We're now looking at the USA competencies set by Michael Dell and matching these with ours before we go on to implement the management development centre program across Europe."

Lisa Farthing commented that, "SHL were chosen as partners in the management development program because they had the expertise, a large range of off-the-shelf material and, perhaps most importantly, were flexible in how they worked with us."

### Key points

**Dell needed to improve senior management succession planning and attract and retain the best sales managers.**

**With SHL, Dell has reduced attrition, implemented succession plans and demonstrated its focus on people development.**



*25 million*  
assessments  
every year

Organisations that understand and maximize their people's potential achieve outstanding results. SHL gives you the insights to make better decisions about your people.

**We call this People Intelligence, Business Results.**

