

# Case Study

The JSMT logo consists of the letters 'JSMT' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, positioned on a solid blue rectangular background.

## A Lesson in Teamwork

### The Problem

As soon as you enter the door of this large London based distributor, you hear the sounds of a frenetically busy sales office. The small reception area leads directly in to a large, open plan office where all of the internal sales and customer service staff work; juggling numerous incoming sales calls, internal enquiries and piles and piles of paperwork.

Drivers stream in and out with bundles of delivery notes and external sales staff frequently pop in to ask about their customers and their recent orders.

The office runs from 6am to 6pm a day and the work can be demanding. Yet loyalty and staff retention in this department is incredibly high; two of the team have served over 15 years.

The owners were concerned that not everyone in the team was pulling their weight, and that the constantly ringing phone was being answered predominantly by the same few people. They were certain that the lion's share of the most important work was falling to the same key people.

However, this was no easy Management issue. Bizarrely, due to the tight loyalty within the team, no-one in the Sales department would acknowledge anything was wrong. The team manager was very protective of the staff, and despite being one of the most hard working members herself, she simply pointed to the exceptional results they achieved together.

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It seemed it was preferable to enjoy the camaraderie and friendship of working in such a close knit group, than suffer the divisive consequences of naming the under-performers and insisting that they work as hard as the rest.

### The Solution

JSMT observed the sales team in action, and ascertained the extent of the issue. We also saw how much they

enjoyed working together, and the banter between the staff obviously helped them manage the workload.

We decided to use the staff loyalty to our advantage. JSMT developed a system-driven automatic pie chart report, which tracked completed calls and activities by user. We set up a couple of large screens on the walls of the office and displayed the report permanently so that everyone could see a copy of the report from anywhere in the office.

Due to the proximity of the office to reception, we wanted to be discreet. The report was unlabelled, and there was no indication of the volume of sales; we simply tracked the proportion of sales taken by each staff member that day. We used colours instead of names, so that staff knew at a glance how they were doing in relation to their peers.

**Subtly, the message was understood, and contribution from some team members increased.**

In the first days this was implemented, the results clearly showed who the most industrious workers were, and they gained well-deserved glory. However as the week progressed, the slices of the pie became more even, and the banter in the office was cheerfully competitive, with everyone looking to pull their weight.

### The Result

Subtly, the message was understood, and contribution from some team members increased.

Without a word of confrontation, the team became tighter, and the effort amongst the staff was more balanced than before. The weaker team members were able to identify and correct their behaviour without losing face with their colleagues and the high volume and quality of output continued in the long term.

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