

Managing more than just animals at the zoo



"We want to ensure that our visitors have a memorable experience including all aspects of our zoo, not just the attraction of our animals. This training helped our managers improve performance and customer service."



The challenge

In a zoo the attention is on the animals – and when it's not on the animals, it's often on the keepers. But it takes more than the animals to keep a zoo running and the visitors happy. Two key members of this large Essex-based zoo needed development – their responsibilities in position had grown and they were now responsible for managing the teams that worked for them in areas other than animal management.

The solution

The zoo is open every day of the week, so taking key staff out for training has a major impact – it had to be timely, appropriate and show real benefits for the individuals concerned. PDT delivered a highly popular ILM Level 3 open programme in First Line Management and the management topics covered in the programme were ideal for these 'new managers' and also allowed them to network with other organisations. Topics included:-

- Building the team, Communication Skills, Delegation
- Effective leadership, Managing and Planning Change
- Managing meetings, Problem Solving, Report Writing
- Using Information for Decisions
- Understanding motivation

Outcomes

Part of the Level 3 programme required that each delegate research and develop a change plan – one that had real business impact. The projects focused on improving customer satisfaction, and their retail ordering system. The implementation of both projects not only highlighted opportunities for cost savings, but also increased customer satisfaction, meeting a key objective of the zoo's mission statement. *"We also got to meet managers from other organisations in the region,"* said John (Catering Manager), *"sharing our experiences and learning from each other."* Rachel, who manages the retail outlets in the zoo, said *"I found the problem solving module extremely useful, it really showed me how to break down the problem to find the root cause. The whole programme was highly practical and we used examples that I could relate to my workplace".*

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