

## Elan looks to the future and Forty2

### the challenge

**how does a rapidly growing company ensure its staff develop the skills, expertise and motivation to continue growth?**

Elan knows more than most about the benefits that skilled, well-trained individuals can bring to an organisation. As one of the leading recruitment companies in the UK, such individuals are its core commodities. Even so, as many businesses come to realise, where the training and development of its own workforce is concerned, some external assistance is often advantageous.

Previously the largest independent IT recruitment consultancy in the UK, Elan was acquired by Manpower plc in January 2000. Since Elan's inception in 1987, it had achieved outstanding organic growth culminating in a turnover of £175 million prior to acquisition.

Not content at standing still Elan knew that the challenge ahead was not merely to continue its expansion, but to reskill

and reposition the organisation from the inside out in order to evolve to a new phase of operational success. Pete

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Anthony, one of Elan's founding Directors, explains the challenge Elan faced: “Elan had rapidly become a large organisation. In 1997 we were ranked in the top fifty fastest growing medium sized companies in the UK.

We recognised that a comprehensive training initiative was a fundamental requirement. We needed to move away from the traditional image of IT recruitment consultants. Our focus is professionalism and the provision of the very best solutions to our customers, both clients and applicants.”

Elan had neither the resource nor the desire to develop such an initiative internally. They needed support from a specialist training company who would work closely in partnership with them to develop a range of programmes specifically geared to their future plans. To date, piece-meal, off-the-shelf training programmes had been used. Now something different was required: a comprehensive, bespoke, co-ordinated and business-driven training initiative into which existing programmes could be integrated.

### the solution

**working in partnership to create the Alchemy academy**

Elan selected Forty2 as their training partner to help take them to their next stage of development.

Why? With a reputation for quality and true partnership, the Forty2 proposition is based on a unique approach of in-depth analysis and evaluation that promises a bespoke range of solutions fully aligned to a client's individual business needs.

As Anthony realised: “Forty2 were prepared to invest time working closely with us, developing a detailed understanding of our goals, strategy and culture, before embarking on the development and implementation stage of the project”. He adds: “We recognised the value of using a partner from outside our organisation who could give us a fresh perspective.”

Specifically, Elan's goals necessitated the

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development of its consultants and management in line with a coherent, common focus on solution sales strategies.

And so from Forty2's preliminary analysis was born Alchemy - the name given to the Elan training academy programme. Using their unique 'academy concept', Forty2 developed a suite of sales and management initiatives, targeting all levels of staff, from senior management to new recruits, to develop a whole new set of skills for Elan's individual staff and teams.

And the result? Anthony explains: “Alchemy offers us the best of both worlds - it is positioned as an 'in house' training initiative yet managed and co-ordinated by an external specialist partner.”

## **making it happen internal marketing**

Key to success of the project was internal marketing. To effectively instil the academy concept across the company, Forty2 took up the challenge of focusing the entire workforce on the same end results.

Nick Anderson, one of Forty2's founding Directors explains: "We work hard to get buy-in from participants before we start training. One of the biggest barriers to personal development is complacency resulting from a lack of understanding of how a programme can practically help achieve business goals. Our initial challenge is to ensure participants arrive at training motivated to get the most from it."

To this end, Alchemy was launched and its goals and content communicated to all staff

at one of Elan's sales conferences. Managers were also coached in how to prepare their staff for the challenges of the

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programmes, and how to support their staff throughout the training and their personal development.

Importantly, this ideology is now continuously monitored and built upon so that the organisation's objectives are always in mind.

## **tangible benefits motivated and effective staff**

Having outsourced their training requirements to Forty2, Elan are now achieving improved efficiencies across the business through their newly-motivated, and newly-skilled, staff.

Through Forty2's series of learning programmes designed to develop traditional recruitment consultants into high performance, solution-orientated sales professionals, Elan's workforce are now better placed than ever before to continue the company's expansion into new markets and revenue channels.

Sean Costello, Elan CEO, comments: "Our staff are highly motivated by Alchemy. It is a powerful vehicle we are using effectively to energise our staff to move Elan forward. Staff are more professional

and better prepared when dealing with clients. They are adopting more structure in client meetings, focusing on building strong relationships, and looking at the

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bigger and longer-term picture. Elan's future success is dependent on these relationships."

And as for the organisation's future, Elan's senior management are confident that

Forty2 have played a pivotal role in helping to implement their new strategies.

As Costello concludes: "The impact is there for all to see - we know it is working when we hear of successful negotiation outcomes which are attributed directly to Alchemy."