



Case Study: ABSA Retail Delivery (Implementation of Skills Inventory Application)

About the Company

Absa Group Limited (Absa), a member of the Barclays Group, is one of South Africa's largest financial services groups offering a complete range of banking, bancassurance and wealth management products and services. Absa's business is conducted primarily in South Africa and on the Africa continent, where it has equity holdings in banks in Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Absa became a subsidiary of Barclays Bank PLC on 27 July 2005, when Barclays acquired a controlling stake in the Absa Group. Barclays is an international financial services group engaged in retail and commercial banking, credit card issuing, investment banking, wealth management and investment management services.

Absa Retail Delivery, one of the bank's strategic business units (SBUs) is a conglomeration of sales forces from various segment and product / service business units. It was formed with an aim to provide integrated sales and service to Absa's products.

Business Challenges

After the merger with Barclay's, Absa's big challenge was to upgrade the capabilities of its sales and service staff to make them more competent. The following initiatives were required on an immediate basis to achieve significant growth in people capabilities:

1. Assessment of current competency and skill levels of front line staff
2. Development of learning paths for key front line roles
3. Development of a tool to assist management in taking up accountability for enhancing the skill levels of staff
4. Delivery of interventions in support of learning paths
5. Adequate skill spread in branch environment to expand customer base and enhance customer service delivery.

Nihilent's Role

- Nihilent formalized a "Skills Assessment Process" which integrates various facets of personal development and gives a single point view of skill spread in branch environment.
- Skills Inventory application was implemented to logically arrive at learning priorities for all staff in branches.
- Nihilent provided a platform for dialogue between manager and employee to arrive at existing capability level against the desired proficiency level.
- A comprehensive training catalogue was created to decide what training courses were required to fill each skill gap.
- A comparative analysis on the potential available versus performance delivered in branches was made to give an insight into the challenges that lie ahead in making ABSA a globally competitive bank.
- Nihilent implemented a robust assessment process supported by a well-defined communication strategy. This resulted in a response rate of 85% across 9 provinces, 70 areas, 746 branches and 9500 employees within a span of 45 days.



Business Benefits Delivered

- The management of Absa Retail Delivery got a clear insight into the expertise available, which is being leveraged to optimize business development opportunities and provide an excellent platform to take performance to the next level.
- Competent employees have created a performance driven culture providing optimum business value to Absa
- The project has resulted in a change in the mindset of talented but so far non-performing staff and created a drive in them to perform better
- Well defined learning paths have been created for all staff

Customer Speak

“Absa has successfully completed a Skills Inventory exercise for over 10,000 employees across 10 regions in South Africa covering 740 branches using the Nihilent CAS tool. We found the consultants’ project management expertise as well as the functionality of the CAS system to be comprehensive as well as having the capability to adjust to our unique and customized needs. Furthermore, Nihilent professionally consulted to understand our business requirements and challenges and customize their solution to meet our needs.”

- Bev Judd, Manager – Learning & Development, Absa Retail