



UK GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION EMPLOYS LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT FOR SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT



The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the United Kingdom Statistics Authority. The office is independent of ministers and reports through the Authority to Parliament. ONS supports the Authority's objectives of promoting and safeguarding the production, publication, quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics that serve the public good. ONS has more than 3,000 employees and has an annual budget of £206.5 million. Weblink: www.statistics.gov.uk

The Office for National Statistics is the UK's largest producer of official statistics and the recognized national statistics institute of the nation. ONS plays a leading role in the development of national and international best practice in the production of official statistics. ONS is committed to being a key part of the Government Statistical Service (GSS), and supports the main themes of the National Statistician's statement, "Statistics Matter," understanding users and their needs, exemplary leadership, inspiring innovation, and effective planning and prioritization.

THE CHALLENGE: LEADING AMIDST CHANGE

ONS's role is to develop an understanding of the UK through trusted statistics. But as the UK becomes ever more complex, the challenges facing ONS become more acute. The increased openness of the economy, the complexity of financial markets, the changing structure of families, population aging, and migration flows, for example, all require the statistics to change in order to remain relevant to the UK. At the same time, ONS's customers demand statistics that are easy to access, analyze and understand.

In late 2011, in order to achieve this vision, ONS adopted new and innovative ways of collecting, storing and analyzing data, exploring further use of the internet, more "mixed-mode" data collection, and wider use of administrative data sources to replace or supplement employee and leadership surveys. In addition, ONS was seeking new and innovative ways to disseminate the data. The goal is to turn the vision into action and present it to the statistical office of the European Union in 2012. These initiatives will mean a fundamental change for ONS by improving efficiency and transforming the agency into a statistical office more suited to the modern information age.

THE SOLUTION: STRENGTHENING AN ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP

The ONS strategy for improvement focuses on how it will improve leadership and skills, record of delivery, understanding the quality of the statistics it produces, strength in innovation and value for money. This strategy will deliver:

- Customers who are informed about the quality of statistics and how statistics drive their decisions, and know how their priorities influence ONS plans
- Staff who are engaged and motivated to work in ONS, who add value and innovation, and contribute to ONS's vision
- Statistics that are recognized as trustworthy, have purpose and are relevant for decision making. It is critically important that the statistical outputs reflect user priorities and that users see how these priorities are reflected in future plans

To drive efficiencies and effectiveness, ONS was tasked with delivering a minimum of 3 percent efficiency savings each year. The agency also had the following goals:

- Adopt a portfolio management approach for managing major programs and projects
- Embed succession planning to develop future leaders
- Increase year-on-year results for the key themes of leadership and managing change and learning and development in the Civil Services People Survey
- Provide strong leadership to aid development of the Governmental Statistics Service and the international statistical agenda

To achieve these goals, ONS charged Kenexa® to propose a way to examine the quality and effectiveness of the senior team, given that the organization needed to change its structure to fit its new portfolio management approach.

Additionally, Kenexa was tasked with providing a way to compare leaders from ONS to other leaders around the world who are in similar sized organizations; linking each senior manager's work to the organization's over-arching goals; supplying ONS with a picture of how managers interact with key stakeholders and make decisions; and highlighting how involved senior leaders are in the development of their people.

Kenexa recommended a range of pre-work diagnostics, individual profiling with development and assessment centers and follow up activity.

Kenexa's Leadership Solutions focuses on measuring leadership capability and capacity through four distinct categories that represent the abilities of some of the best leaders in the world, including creating strategy, engaging talent, inspiring people and achieving excellence. The Kenexa 360° Leadership report provides valuable feedback on a leader's use of the High Performance Behaviors. The report aims to increase self-awareness and provide specific focus for development activities.

THE RESULTS: IMPROVING THROUGH BETTER LEADERSHIP

ONS opted to begin with a pilot program to assess all of the senior leadership team and deputy directors through Kenexa's Leadership Preference Questionnaires, available online.

Following the completion of the assessment, leaders received individual feedback reports during a session with a consultant from Kenexa. In total, 47 senior managers completed the Leadership Preference Questionnaires.

The Kenexa 360° Leadership report provides feedback for a leader's use of behaviors, specifically the 12 High Performance Behaviors that Kenexa has identified as necessary for success in today's ever-changing and complex business environment. Kenexa gave ONS a group report to provide a richer understanding of performance. Through this report, combined with feedback from multiple sources, ONS achieved a complete picture of its team's strengths and weaknesses, which led to the building of a new leadership development program, which is ongoing.

Kenexa's assessments are now at the heart of ONS strategic improvement program. In highly technical groups, ONS has found Kenexa's Leadership Solutions particularly useful in enabling senior employees to gain valuable insight into how their performance is perceived across different groups. Kenexa's research found people behave differently when interacting with different groups, so understanding these differences is a powerful tool for team development.

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The Kenexa® Factor

Challenges

Fundamentally transforming the way an organization does business in ways that are more suited to the modern information age through improved efficiency brought on by stronger leadership.

Solution

Using Kenexa's Leadership Solutions to determine areas of strengths and growth opportunities for leaders.

Results

- Implemented a new leadership development program based on feedback provided by Kenexa's Leadership Solutions. This program is ongoing
- Provided valuable insight for senior employees into how leadership performance is perceived at ONS
- Evaluated 47 senior managers through Kenexa's Leadership Preference Questionnaires in a short period of time