



CASE STUDY #1501

# DS Smith



One of the biggest challenges for any manager is engaging their people to contribute and feel part of a vision and future growth. Engaging managers is now a fundamental part of the continued development of DS Smith and supports our ambition to be a great company by any measure. //

MILES ROBERTS, GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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## DS Smith

**26,000**  
NO. OF  
EMPLOYEES

**Packaging Solutions**  
INDUSTRY  
VERTICAL

**Global**  
REGION

**Values Alignment**  
SOLUTION  
BASIS

**2015**  
YEAR JOINED  
FUEL50

DS Smith is a leading provider of sustainable packaging solutions across the globe, with a presence in 36 countries, employing 26,000 people.

DS Smith's employee surveys confirmed something that they had suspected – that after a large number of acquisitions, the way employees understood DS Smith values varied significantly.

The Group Chief Executive, Miles Roberts, put it well when reporting the employee survey results back to the business:

**“We have worked hard to improve the discussion between colleagues of what we need to do as individuals, teams and businesses and how we are going to achieve it. Sometimes we lack a sense of why we need to do something.”**

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

After a large number of acquisitions, DS Smith found that the way employees understood the company's values varied significantly.

### INITIATIVE

As part of a package of measures, DS Smith created a new initiative called **Engaging Managers**, designed to help managers learn to articulate the ambition and direction of the business and why certain behaviours were required to move teams along that path. Engaging Managers provided an opportunity for all managers at all levels to inspire those around them; develop skills to increase employee engagement and most importantly, become true role models for their corporate values to achieve their strategic goals.

To do this, DS Smith focused Engaging Managers on values because, as Claire Barraclough, Learning & Development Manager at DS Smith said: “having values makes us do things”.

To call Engaging Managers a *programme* would be a misnomer because learning was ongoing, coming before, during and after formal time in a face-to-face learning environment. Instead, managers were supported throughout a process in which they learnt not only from their facilitator but from one another – and then applied the new skills and behaviours to the job.



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### SOLUTION

To drive the values-based initiative, DS Smith turned to Fuel50's CareerDrive™ tool, which allows users to invest in their own careers by helping them, their managers and their organisation to understand their values.

**"The selling point of the CareerDrive™ was that it could be designed completely as DS Smith wanted.** We were able to focus on values and turn the appearance of the CareerDrive™ into a bespoke single-page site. This meant that DS Smith employees could understand it quickly, be taught how to use it and become engaged with it from the outset."

HANNAH MORAN, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE AT 10EIGHTY (FUEL50'S UK-BASED RESELLER)

Two of the many innovative features of Engaging Managers were firstly, the inclusive way it was designed and developed by an internal team of experts in the learning and development field; and secondly, that it was delivered internally, rather than by external training providers.

Both of these were achieved by creating an international L&D network, which is now thriving with over 63 home-grown Engaging Facilitators accredited using an internal standard of excellence.

Claire believes that the commitment to internal delivery was crucial to the success of Engaging Managers: "Internal delivery has been hugely powerful for us."

Those who may have doubted the need for Engaging Managers were soon won over, Claire says, because: "Once it became clear to those on the pilots that we weren't trying to make people be anything or do anything to them, everyone felt a bit more relaxed. All we wanted to do was encourage them to become the best managers that they could be. That's clearly good for business and good for everyone and that's why people bought into the initiative."

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The key issue was, not only whether managers were engaged with their jobs within DS Smith, but how they could approach their roles both individually and collectively in order to engage all staff in the business. //





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### RESULTS

The tool has now been translated into 20 languages across DS Smith.

The Engaging Managers initiative has reached 600 people in the UK alone and across the whole Group, 1,885 people have been trained since it launched in May 2015; including their regions in Asia-Pacific and North America.

The impact of Engaging Managers can be seen in DS Smith's 2015 Pulse Survey, which polls a representative sample of 10% of the business's employees. Two key indicators show that the business is heading in the right direction – firstly, the overall Employee Engagement scores rose from 62% to 74%, and secondly the Performance Enablement Index (which measures the ability and opportunity DS Smith employees feel they have to achieve their goals and deliver the quality of product and services their customers expect) increased by 10%, from 65% to 75%.

