

## strategy journeys

how I have helped organisations  
develop effective strategic plans  
and realise strategic opportunities



# Changing perspectives

## - the opportunities and challenges of new ways of working

*Bringing two organisations together is a challenge – even if they are sister companies within the same group, operating to similar values and principles. There is much to learn, and with so much attention on changes within the organisation it can be easy to overlook customers' perspectives.*

### **The context**

Two financial services organisations within the same group were being merged in a phased programme to create a stronger player with more 'muscle' in a highly competitive market. One of the key benefits was to be able to offer customers of each organisation the complementary financial products provided by its sister: the financial justification for the merger relied upon achieving these 'cross-sales', and understandably the project to deliver these had very high internal priority.

### **The challenge**

Early progress had been mixed and the project team was under considerable pressure to deliver. The first pilot marketing campaign had not produced the expected response rate; and system developments were needed to enable products to be sold through the additional channels now available. The challenges of learning about different products and developing new ways of thinking and working were immense, especially on top of achieving tough targets for the existing business.

### **How I helped**

- The initial priority was to develop a structured approach to the various workstream initiatives and a phased plan for building the capability to deliver results: it was important that everybody had a clear understanding of how the many project tasks fitted together and contributed to the overall objectives.
- We analysed the 'new' customer base to gain a better understanding of the needs, attitudes and behaviours of the various segments, so that a more realistic assessment could be made of what results could be expected and marketing strategies developed for each customer group.
- A more effective direct marketing strategy was essential, and urgent. The second pilot campaign was a turning point: we invested a lot of energy in planning this, in training and involving the telemarketing team, and in developing printed and verbal communications that would explain the new opportunities to customers. Not only was it much more effective, but we learned a lot by listening to how customers responded, and to the views of the people who were talking to them, which shaped the approach to future campaigns and informed revised business projections.
- The importance of spending quality time talking to customers was highlighted too, challenging the established 'product campaign' led approach to telemarketing with one that invested effort in finding out about their needs and explaining the new services available.

### **The outcome**

The learning from these few months was vital in shaping future developments, in particular a more effective communications programme to explain to customers about the new products and services available, and a more successful direct marketing strategy. The project was more clearly structured, with a better understanding of what was needed to deliver results, more realistic projections and a phased plan that the restructured project team was able to take forward.

David Booth: ixq  
[www.ixqconsulting.co.uk](http://www.ixqconsulting.co.uk)