

BT Global Services – a leader in the adoption of the ROI methodology for learning and development in the UK

Karen Chappell-Tay is Head of L&D for BT Global Services: one of the first and most advanced adopters of the ROI Institute methodology in the UK. Jane Massy has worked to support BT Global services since 2005 and recently talked over with her the progress made at BTGS, key lessons learned and challenges ahead.

BT Global Services has led the adoption of business impact and value (ROI) measurement for L&D in BT. 'We began building our competence and capability through in house ROI Institute programmes for the L&D team over two years ago and by the end of 2007 had built a core team of six people to ROI Certification level, some of whom have already delivered case studies and completed full certification. We knew we needed to build up our knowledge and core competence in measurement to ROI and it was essential to give the L&D business partners in particular the knowledge and skills needed. However, the real turning point for us was when just over a year ago we formally finalised our strategy and policy on L&D investment measurement. This has delivered a new mindset and sent out a clear message across the business ' this is the way we do things here' in Global Services. This message is intended to shift everyone's mindset away from looking at L&D as a cost into one which views L&D as a focused investment intended to effect measureable changes in business and performance objectives. It has enabled our team of L&D business consultants to hold much more meaningful business focused discussions and gives them a reference point to ensure that investment is targeted towards clear business impact measures that delivers real value! Having the policy has influenced the way we plan and design; it's changed the mindset through its very existence. As a result, we have achieved some really significant return on investment but it has also helped us identify programmes (often carried along historically) where the alignment to business objectives is not evident and where there is little or no value. We've started a real shift in mindset in the business away from ordering training to really focusing on the business objectives and performance improvement requirements and only then completing the diagnosis on whether L&D is in fact the right solution.

It has helped to force thinking about the cost of ownership of the problems and business needs and enabled our L&D business consultants to hold different procurement and business conversations. I sometimes call our L&D business consultants 'non learning managers' as we learn to help the business understand that training courses may not really be the most effective answer to the problem they need to solve. I cannot emphasise enough how much our formal strategy and policy adoption has helped us to deliver on the change in mindset. Going forward, we've got a core team through the ROI programme and fully utilising the same methodology.

We now need to raise awareness and competence further across the teams: I want everyone accountable for L&D to bring this kind of business and value focus into 'the way we do things around here' so we can deliver the best return for our investment in L&D as a business.'

If you'd like to know more about how abdi as the UK ROI Institute representative worked with BT Global Services, please contact Jane Massy for further details.