



## Life-changing training extends beyond work

GM Customer Service and Communications at The Lines Company Jo Ireland introduced LearningPlanet to the company's call centre team at a time of major change. What she needed was support with soft skills training to give staff the added confidence and skills to face the challenges ahead. It was an investment in the team that's paid dividends.

Based in Te Kuiti, the contact centre is a team of 18 people covering contact centre, billing, credit control and faults.

"Everything changed, our whole system - the computer system, the pricing system, we had new managers."

As a new GM herself Jo has been thrilled with the results LearningPlanet has delivered – it has since evolved to become a core tool and is now a foundational part of their competency framework.

"The learning has re-enforced knowledge and provided a sense of confidence. A key observation is that staff started using a common language which helps ensure consistency and improve communication.



The Lines Company contact centre team loves learning.

"It has given staff confidence in coping with and understanding change, a new language being used, gaining a real understanding of what things mean in business terms, back-to-basics understanding of the key things they need to do their job, more openness to learning in general."

Jo acknowledges that some staff were initially reluctant to take part.

"It was a slow start with mixed responses. Some leapt right in, others weren't so sure. Each person did their booklet and module and then had a conversation with the customer experience manager before moving onto the next module which helped cement and implement the learning into practice.

*"For people like Alison it's been life-changing. It has raised the bar in terms of the thinking and input into team discussions and agile scrum inputs."*

The team now agrees a learning pathway that is up on the wall and have created avatar representing each team member.



# LearningPlanet

"They move their avatar between modules as they progress. Staff are given half an hour a fortnight to complete a module but can negotiate doing more at quieter times or at home. The idea of having a roadmap with staff avatars is to create team visibility of the learning journey and also drive self-management."

"For people like Alison (see next story) it has been life changing. It has raised the bar in terms of the thinking and input into team discussions and agile scrum inputs."

Now the team is not only doing the learning but looking beyond the pathway to explore topics they are interested in. It is also used for group learning sessions and, when used in conjunction with coaching, provides a perfect opportunity to have a discussion, says Jo.

*"It's a win-win for everyone – the company gets a well-priced learning, effective tool and our staff learn some key skills and competencies they need to do their job better."*

"Also, budget was a factor for us, and this has also supported us taking this wider across the rest of the company. LearningPlanet has excellent content but is also great value for money and the fact that new modules are added all the time is great and keeps it current."

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## "It's been amazing" ...Alison's story

**"Do you remember the day you threw your toys out about learning?" GM Customer service and Communications at The Lines Company Jo Ireland is chatting with contact centre representative Alison about her LearningPlanet experience.**

"You said, "I can't learn this. I can't do this at my age."

"And I said, "Rubbish – I hear your story, I hear you on the phone, you got this girl. So that's where we started thinking about your learning and you started thinking about how you learn and that you COULD learn."

Alison is the first person to admit she had her defences up when she was first shown LearningPlanet. Having been with The Lines Company for nearly 10 years, she was faced with changing processes and systems, and being expected to learn on top of it was a step too far.



# LearningPlanet

"I was well and truly stuck in the groove. I've lived on my own for more than 10 years – I didn't have anyone at home to say that's not good – what are you doing there?"

"When I first saw LearningPlanet I didn't see any point in it. Jo and Peter [team leader] have shown me that I'm more intelligent than I ever thought I was. Peter sat me down, he started me off and said you have to do these modules. Every time I read one, I was like, "Oh no, that's me".

"I've had lots of horrible stuff happen in my life – I had built walls to stop people getting in and now I've got all these little holes in my walls. It's just amazing how much I've learnt – that it's your attitude, you choose these things."

"With the first four modules Peter would sit me down and would do them with me. When you read the reasons why you do it, or it's not a good look to be doing it, it has shifted me and given me awareness. My whole attitude has changed because of it. It's been amazing. I've always had empathy, but it's brought it out so much more. My conversations on the phone now are quite different.

"I've spoken to two people this morning that wanted to get my details so they could say how good I was. Those are the sorts of phone calls I have now, whereas previously I was having some that were quite argumentative.

"It's done a lot for my home life too – it's been quite life changing."

