



# Case Study



## Message Pad

### Talking technology with ITQ

Message Pad is a one of the leading suppliers of advanced Contact Management Services to UK businesses. Message Pad delivers call centre and messaging services to a wide range of organisations throughout the UK from its seven office locations.

The Contact Management industry is highly dynamic, requiring continuous service evolution to meet the needs of clients in a rapidly changing world. Staff have to be confident in using ever changing software applications and new technologies to ensure that they can offer an efficient and effective service.

#### COMMITMENT TO STAFF TRAINING

Message Pad has always invested heavily in staff training and coaching – resulting in extremely high staff retention levels. Staff are encouraged to learn and are offered the opportunity to gain qualifications. To date, training has been vocationally based – focusing on customer service, call handling and supervisory skills. However, Message Pad felt that their staff could benefit from a broader skills programme and started to look at the range of qualifications available – especially one that encompassed IT skills as well as call centre skills.

#### ITQ OFFERED MORE

ITQ, the new IT user skills qualification seemed perfect. Not only does ITQ cover the whole range of core IT user skills, it can also be customised to include specific skills, such as call handling and customer service. Message Pad felt that ITQ would both improve staff performance and act as a motivator, by offering employees the chance to study for a new, industry recognised qualification. Message Pad offered all of its 60 staff the opportunity to work towards ITQ accreditation.

#### KNOWING WHERE TO START WITH E-SKILLS PASSPORT

Message Pad chose e-skills Passport – the online skills management service to ensure that all ITQ learning activity was focused and relevant. Not only did e-skills Passport help Message Pad understand more about the current skill levels of its staff, it also enabled company managers to develop learning profiles based on particular job roles. This meant that Message Pad could tailor ITQ learning targets to individuals and job types – ensuring that all training was relevant. All Message Pad staff completed an e-skills Passport – providing a base point for all training activity.

#### MAKING LEARNING A COMPANY ACTIVITY

Message Pad worked with Henley College in Coventry, AT Solutions and Bournebrook Consulting to deliver ITQ. Staff were able to learn on line, at college or at home, according to individual preferences and working patterns. Message Pad appointed ITQ champions at each of their offices who acted as a focal point for all ITQ learning activity. The champions helped to support learners and ensured that any issues could be resolved quickly and simply.

#### SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS BENEFITS

ITQ was a success within Message Pad. Staff enjoyed learning and felt more confident and empowered in their roles. Many also felt a huge sense of achievement in gaining an industry recognised qualification. As far as the business was concerned, ITQ reduced all first line support queries and made staff more efficient and productive in their use of technology. ITQ also enhanced staff retention levels and improved general staff motivation.



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### Lessons Learned

• **Appoint an ITQ champion:** As Message Pad operates on a 24 hour basis and has staff in 7 locations, it was difficult to ensure that all learners had access to a training provider who could help them with any aspect of ITQ. The decision to appoint ITQ champions was critical to the success of ITQ as there was always someone on hand to advise or enthuse staff.

➤ *About 2 months into the project, a number of staff wanted to give up – however thanks to the ITQ champion and all the on site support, almost all staff went onto complete their ITQ*

Kit Ruparel, CIO, Message Pad

• **Tailor training material around the company's needs:** Training material needs to be presented in language that staff understand. For many, that means that materials need to be adapted to encompass familiar scenarios and functions. Message Pad worked alongside Henley College and the other training providers to customise the training material to the culture and language of Message Pad.

➤ *We created a staff brochure – telling staff about the training and what it was intended to do. It was just a two-page document, but everyone in the company received a copy - and it really made a difference*

Kit Ruparel, CIO, Message Pad

• **Make all learning fit business and individual requirements:** There is a tendency to see training as a single programme of learning with a defined beginning and ending. Some individuals are uncomfortable with learning in a pre-defined way with set timescales. As ITQ is all about continuous learning, staff can learn in bite sized chunks, to suit their needs and those of the business.

➤ *Don't try to train your staff all at once. Most people learn best in short concentrated bursts of activity. There is a tendency to try and get all the training done at once, but it can cause problems*

Kit Ruparel, CIO, Message Pad

• **Work with a training provider that understands your business:** It's vital that a training provider understands the business pressures and realities of daily working life. As Message Pad operated on a 24-hour basis, training had to be flexible so that people could learn at different times, depending on their shift or working times.

➤ *Our training provider appreciated that we didn't work traditional office hours and tailored the delivery of the training accordingly. The majority of training was delivered by e-learning, but the reviews and mandatory assessments were all done on site – to minimise any travelling or 'down time' on the business*

Kit Ruparel, CIO, Message Pad