

BARR SOFT DRINKS INVESTS IN FRONTLINE PEOPLE LEADERS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS



ABOUT BARR SOFT DRINKS

Part of the AG Barr Group, Barr Soft Drinks was established over 140 years ago in Scotland and now operates across the UK and internationally. It's home to some of the UK's most loved soft drinks brands, such as the iconic IRN-BRU, launched in 1901 and still going strong today, vibrant RUBICON fruit and juice drinks, or the unique range of BARR flavours. Barr Soft Drinks' brands offer consumers a choice of great tasting products and bring exciting innovation to the market. The business currently employs 860 people across seven UK locations.

THE CHALLENGE

Barr Soft Drinks' skilled and loyal employees are critical to the future success of the organisation. That is why the business continually invests to help develop talent and achieve its business objectives.

Like many organisations, Barr Soft Drinks has promoted many of its frontline operations people leaders from within, with many individuals having come

through the ranks into positions of seniority in the supply chain organisation.

Promoting staff from entry-level positions has its benefits, such as fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce where hard work and loyalty is rewarded. However, the business recognised there was more that could be done to equip leaders with the core skills, capabilities and behaviours necessary to



SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- A frontline leadership development programme creates a more consistent and effective leadership culture and has a significant impact on the way people work.
- Since 2020, over 100 of Barr Soft Drinks' frontline supply chain operations people leaders have completed the seven-module learning journey so far.
- The training curriculum provides a safe learning environment with one-to-one coaching, where people feel confident to open up without the constraints of the working day.
- The programme helps ensure supply chain people leaders are 'fit for leadership' by building on each individual's knowledge and experiences and giving them the skills needed to succeed in more senior people leadership roles.

allow them to confidently realise their full leadership potential.

To ensure that people leaders within the supply chain were ready and able to be the very best version of themselves in their leadership roles, Barr Soft Drinks sought external leadership development expertise. This would provide an objective assessment of its needs and deliver the targeted training that would create a more consistent and effective leadership culture across its supply chain operations teams.

THE SOLUTION

Following a tendering process, Tack TMI Leadership Factory was selected as the

best fit with the experience to meet Barr Soft Drinks' requirements. After a review of the frontline leaders within the supply chain organisation, Tack TMI Leadership Factory created a training curriculum with seven modules as a development journey where people could learn together.

Scott McGlashan, Head of Operations for Scotland at Barr Soft Drinks says,

“ Tack TMI Leadership Factory demonstrated a strong understanding of our needs. They showcased their relevant experience, drawing on previous customer projects with similar challenges to ours.”

The project started during the pandemic so Tack TMI Leadership Factory initially developed the programme to be delivered virtually. It has since expanded to become a blended virtual/face-to-face experience enabling staff from multiple sites to access the training together. This has cemented relationships and knowledge sharing widely across the organisation.

Linda Derrick, Head of HR Partnering adds,

“ The programme provides a structured approach to equip our frontline leaders with the skills, capabilities and confidence to realise their leadership potential. It offers a range of initiatives to help our colleagues have a host of tools in their leadership toolbox, including internal programmes such as Manager Essentials, and a full mentoring scheme that also supports improving our leaders' growth.

We are really pleased to see those cross-functional relationships continuing with colleagues who might never have met otherwise.”



THE LEARNING JOURNEY

Each programme starts with a launch session to engage the participants on what they can expect to get out of it, together with a chance to hear from previous participants. It then kicks off with the completion of a psychometric (DISC), as well as a 360 review with feedback from their manager, direct reports and peers. This is sent to a minimum of five colleagues who they would like a set of questions asked to.

Seven workshops follow, spaced out every three to four weeks to embed learning in-between. People are encouraged to participate from home and to not engage in work-related activities during each of the workshops.

This was to enable a safe environment so people felt they could open up freely without constraints and to separate the working day from their learning journey.

1. **The role of the manager** – focuses on self-reflection of the individual's role as manager and introduces emotional intelligence and intrinsic motivation.
2. **Coaching** – develops coaching skills to enable more of a coaching culture and supportive leadership model. Participants can also experience coaching individually from highly skilled Tack TMI professionals.

- 3. **Change** – explores how to manage buy-in for change and emotional reactions of change, together with tips and techniques to handle those.
- 4. **Empowering teams** – covers the methodology of how to build teams and how to instruct and participate in teams, using interactive and fun activities.
- 5. **Managing performance** – teaches the softer skills required for managing teams, including how to motivate and develop to get the best out of the people that you have.
- 6. **Communication and influencing** – uncovers approaches for influencing people in cross-functions and the people in your team to start building communities.

- 7. **Challenging conversations** – looks at how to manage conflict and deal with the more challenging conversations.

The workshops build so the more challenging topics are addressed towards the end of the programme to allow people to prepare themselves for the two final workshops.

From workshop three, participants focus on a real-life team project centred on the principles of a supply chain strategy, evaluating and looking at ways it could be improved. With progress reviewed at each subsequent session, they then present the improved project to a member of the senior leadership team.



USING PARTICIPANT ADVOCACY FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES

The success of the learning journeys that the initial cohorts had been on is reflected in ongoing conversations and feedback, and it was clear it had been well received. Attendees had a positive experience during the programme and Barr Soft Drinks has been able to leverage the natural energy and buzz generated from the first wave of participants to expand the programme more widely.

By positioning the programme as a valuable experience that helps people think more critically and strategically about how they approach challenges and manage teams, the senior leadership team was able to win over even sceptical participants using positive advocates from the initial cohorts.

With over 100 delegates having already participated in the programme, the team hopes to continue to offer it as a mandatory training course for all new starters in frontline leadership roles. Scott highlights,

“ The leadership development programme has had a positive impact on the organisation’s company culture and is helping to build a strong pipeline of leaders for the future.”



BENEFITS

Aligning leadership behaviours

The leadership development programme has seen a significant impact on the behaviours of the participants, particularly in terms of how they communicate and interact with others. By providing a forum for peers across multi-site operations teams to discuss and practice leadership skills, the programme is encouraging participants to test out new behaviours and integrate them into their everyday work.

A more positive work environment

There has been a noticeable shift in the approach used by frontline people leaders and in the way they seek to motivate their team members to deliver business performance outcomes.

Reducing staff turnover

Post-Covid, the business experienced a spike in voluntary turnover. Together with other development initiatives, the investment in frontline leadership has contributed to an even more positive working environment which in turn has positively impacted attrition rates.

Fit for leadership

Through the Tack TMI leadership factory programme and internal people leader development programmes, there is now a systematic way for supply chain teams to invest in new frontline leaders to ensure they are equipped for leadership, by equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in more senior roles. This approach means that individuals appointed to frontline leadership roles can thrive and lead their teams with confidence.

Positive impact on culture

By helping people feel more confident in themselves as leaders, the programme is not only benefiting individuals, but also the wider supply chain organisation. As frontline leaders grow in confidence, they will be more likely to take the initiative and make better decisions.

The programme has helped people leaders to see the benefits of taking a more balanced approach to decision making by pausing to consider their next move rather than simply reacting to what's in front of them. This is helping to drive a breakthrough in team culture, ensuring that Barr Soft Drinks is well-positioned for future success and able to navigate leadership challenges more effectively.

What's next?

In addition to developing leaders, the organisation is also making plans to empower frontline colleagues with the skills they need to be effective influencers and communicators in the area of safety, a critical aspect of work life at Barr Soft Drinks. By equipping safety committee members and other frontline employees with key skills, the organisation is taking a proactive approach to building its culture of safety.



ABOUT WORKING WITH TACK TMI LEADERSHIP FACTORY

“ The balance of experience in learning solutions together with aligned drinks industry experience has been key in partnering with Tack TMI Leadership Factory. They could really relate and understood what we needed to achieve, as many of their professionals come from leadership roles in similar sectors.”

Scott McGlashan, Head of Operations for Scotland, Barr Soft Drinks

“ We have received extremely positive feedback from attendees of the Tack TMI Leadership Factory programme, specifically calling out the quality of facilitation during their cohort sessions. The Tack TMI team partnered with us to adapt the programme to best suit our business requirements, it wasn't a “one size fits all” programme.”