

## Amgen

### Background

Originally founded in 1980 as Applied Molecular Genetics, Amgen pioneered the development of products based on advances in molecular biology. It introduced the first biologically derived human therapeutics - the biotechnology industry's first blockbusters - treating chronic kidney disease and cancer-related conditions.

Today, Amgen is a Fortune 500 company with 17,500 employees worldwide and revenues approaching \$15 billion. The business is truly global and its products support cancer care as well as the treatment of anemia, rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. Amgen was ranked second among large companies by *The Scientist* in its 2007 "Best Places to Work in Industry" survey.

In the UK, the company found itself needing to respond to changes in the way that the healthcare market worked with its pharmaceutical suppliers. Until recently, salespeople worked directly with clinicians in the National Health Service. As health economics have become more sophisticated, bringing tighter fiscal control, large, specialist procurement 'hubs' have developed. These hubs focus buying decisions on price, as well as clinical benefit.

As a result, Amgen needed their salespeople to develop a new, more holistic commercial sales skill set. The UK sales team of 35 had included three different roles which interfaced respectively with doctors, procurement, and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). The imperative now was to design a new role that would provide an optimal, single point of engagement with the key decision makers within the local health economy.

The newly established Odyssey competency framework developed by Gary Sagar (Amgen UK and Ireland Human Resources Director) and his team became the basis for role definition. The key question of how to assess the existing sales team's potential to step up to these tough but essential new roles was critical to success in managing the change.

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### Solution

Gary led the development of a one-day, intensive assessment experience for all existing salespeople. He believes in the predictive power of personality and behavior data to sort 'outstanding' from merely 'average' performers and wanted a stretching combination of activities to set expectations of the new role.

Gary had been impressed with assessments from IPAT's parent company, OPP<sup>®</sup> Ltd, which were used in his development work, so he decided to use a personality assessment from OPP for this project.

He chose the 16PF® Questionnaire as one of the world's best validated tools, and also because OPP could map outputs directly to key competencies for the role.

The resulting tailored report (The 16PF Competency Report) gave him a detailed insight into 'fit' between the candidate and job success, as well as generated interview questions targeting the gaps between the applicant's profile and the role. The 16PF instrument provided accurate measurement of attributes as diverse as creative thinking and organization and planning skills.

The comprehensive assessment process included data on previous performance and experience, account planning, negotiation role plays, bid preparation, a test about the National Health Service, and a panel interview focusing on behavioral competencies. Gary was anxious to involve line management in the process, especially to secure buy-in. The interview guides generated by the 16PF instrument were a strong supporting tool in helping to deploy them effectively.

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## Business Benefits

The whole process moved very speedily from kick-off in October 2007 to the successful candidates taking up new roles in January 2008. Gary says, "Experience shows that restructuring is best done quickly, with a robust, transparent and valid process".

All team members were immediately appointed. Because one key purpose of the assessment day was a training needs analysis, everyone received in-depth feedback and the opportunity to create a development plan in the context of the new career structure.

For the majority, ambitious development plans with clear objectives and strong line manager support was a positive signal of the organization's confidence in them. Gary says, "Some people were not convinced of the need for training at the outset, but the feedback is 'It's been great!'. We took a pulse survey in January around how the change had been handled, and directors followed up actions with their teams. Morale has improved substantially and people can see it's the right structure and the smart thing to do."

As further evidence of project success, the process - including the 16PF customized assessment - is now being adopted for all hires new to the organization. "We are looking at making the report increasingly customized now so that it uses our language and is totally Amgen-specific", says Gary.

On working with OPP, Gary says, "They gave good advice; we derived a lot of benefit from the debrief sessions we ran with OPP's occupational psychologist. OPP was very responsive, with every stage turned around quickly. And, of course, the 16PF Questionnaire has proved an effective decision support tool; the report narrative is a

great aid for decision makers, while the 16PF Candidate Report helps candidates clearly understand their strengths and weaknesses”.

## The Real Test of Whether the Process ‘Worked’

“I was so impressed that the results of the behavioral interview and the role-plays bore out the 16PF results so strongly – consistency was excellent. The mix of personality and behavioral assessment along with knowledge and skills assessment is really a uniquely powerful combination’, Gary says.

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For information about how IPAT could work with your organization to create a tailored competency framework or to help you with your business challenge, please contact our Business Development Team at 800 225 4728 or by email at [bizdev@ipat.com](mailto:bizdev@ipat.com).