

PartyGaming

Managing change through discovering talent

PARTYGAMING



Since it first ventured into online gaming in 1997, PartyGaming has been in the vanguard of the industry's development and is today a FTSE 250 company on the London Stock Exchange and owns some of the most recognised brands in:

www.PartyPoker.com
www.PartyCasino.com
www.FoxyBingo.com
www.WorldPokerTour.com

The challenge

Online gaming is a very fast-moving, innovative, creative and technology-driven industry. The ability to adapt to change is a prerequisite for any online gaming company, especially in light of the intense competition and ever increasing consumer demands for great entertainment from new and exciting games.

Significant structural changes in the industry in the last three years, largely a result of the change in the US law in 2006 that resulted in online gaming being prohibited, have had consequential impacts on corporate structures.

The range of disciplines and skills have both changed and widened significantly in recent years. PartyGaming's human resources department, headed by Group HR Director Kathy Swindley, has had to greatly modify its recruitment and retention methods and requirements – hiring and retaining top talent are essential for PartyGaming as it strives to achieve its goal to become the world's most valuable online gaming company.

The nature of PartyGaming's growth has yielded some interesting HR challenges says Kathy Swindley: "We'd tended to recruit people on their personal reputation or because they had outstanding technical competencies for, say, computer programming.

Yet, when the US regulatory environment changed, that resulted in the loss of three-quarters of our business, we needed to bring on board people with skills that could help us to internationalise the business.

PartyGaming's product offering was largely focused on one game, in one language and in one currency before the US law changed – being, poker in English and dollars. Today, PartyGaming's product suite is much broader and is offered in several different languages and currencies – we are global and we are also local.

In order to meet the challenges that arose from the huge change in 2006, we needed to bring about a cultural shift to more strategic thinking and problem solving. To make this happen, PartyGaming developed a talent management programme that put people assessment at its core. Led by the HR team, but signed off as a part of PartyGaming's overall business strategy, the results of the programme have been very positive."

Kathy Swindley says: "We knew that assessment needed to be the foundation for both the development of existing employees and the effective recruitment of new hires. We used to licence off-the-shelf, part online and part paper assessments, but their functionality was limited and they hadn't really been used a great deal.

"Our search for a new assessment provider, with similar youthful branding and a dynamic approach, led us to Talent Q, a business established in 2006 by workplace psychology guru, Roger Holdsworth. They offered us the scientific psychological rigour, plus a quick and cost effective online solution."

For recruitment, PartyGaming now has an assessment model that candidates find very user-friendly and which has greatly improved their initial experience of PartyGaming. Interviewers use it as an essential part of pre-screening and they then take the outputs to challenge the interviewees.

"The Talent Q assessments have improved the quality of new hires, partly due to the fact we're conducting more effective interviews. The way the results are presented, with helpful interview prompts, is especially useful if you're in a situation where you don't have much time to prepare," added Kathy Swindley.

The assessments are now being used more widely within PartyGaming for learning and development of all employees. As the talent management programme gathers pace, the results will form the bedrock for new executive coaching and management development programmes.



Talent Q provides innovative online psychometric assessments, training and assessment consulting, addressing talent management challenges throughout the employee lifecycle.