

Programme development and training for the Saudi retail industry



Summary

We collaborated with a prominent retailer in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to develop a tailored selection of retail training programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of their retail staff.

Background

A major retail organisation undergoing Saudization has transitioned roles exclusively to Saudi nationals, focusing on replacing expatriate workers with local Saudi women. This shift has presented challenges, including cultural and skills gaps among female employees who may lack adequate workplace preparation.

The transition from an expatriate-dominated workforce, combined with limited knowledge transfer, has created a skills gap. Many female employees, juggling responsibilities like motherhood or university, face difficulties balancing their commitments, contributing to high staff turnover.

Our solutions

To help the leading retail organisation upskill its workforce and improve retention, we conducted a three-phase project to develop retail training programmes for a newly established Retail Academy. This academy is the first dedicated retail training facility in Saudi Arabia and is notable for pioneering mixed-gender classrooms and trainers in the region, setting a new standard for inclusivity in the Middle East.

1. Scoping

During a scoping visit, comprehensive discussions took place to establish key aspects of the project. This included brand guidelines, communication structure, session timetabling, clarifying the programme objectives and expected outcomes upon learner completion.

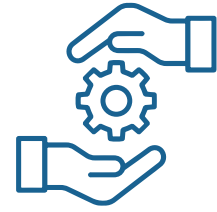
Consideration was given to learner entry requirements, expected group sizes, and the available teaching facilities for each programme, including provisions for practical activities. The scoping visit also delved into the experience of the delivery team, encompassing aspects such as programme facilitation and competence assessments.



2. Development

Our focus was on the development of four retail training programmes:

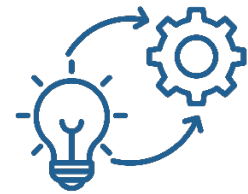
- Retail Sales Representative
- Retail Store Manager
- Retail Area Manager
- Retail Brand Manager



Our approach involved refining the initial frameworks to create qualification structures approved by City and Guilds and Saudi Arabia's Technical Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC). We developed a comprehensive suite of resources, including schemes of work, summative assessments, on-the-job training guidance and learner and trainer guides. We also produced session plans, learning aids, formative assessments and unit-specific materials. The process incorporated framework development, content creation, quality assurance and collaborative client reviews, ensuring the programme met City and Guilds accreditation standards, TVTC funding criteria, and client expectations.

3. Implementation

To support programme delivery, Train the Trainer materials were developed to meet required standards and equip participants with essential facilitation skills. Training took place at the new retail academy in Riyadh, where ten trainers were upskilled over ten days. The sessions began with trainers completing People 1st International's Certificate in Delivering Training, ensuring a consistent delivery approach. Trainers were then guided on using the newly developed retail training content, with a focus on assessment methodologies and evaluating workplace competence.



Impact

The first cohort of 200 participants began the Sales Representative programme in November 2023. The initiative aims to improve staff retention, enhance customer service, foster positive workplace attitudes and support succession planning. By building a skilled workforce and promoting retail as a career of choice, the programme is designed to address future workforce needs and drive long-term success.