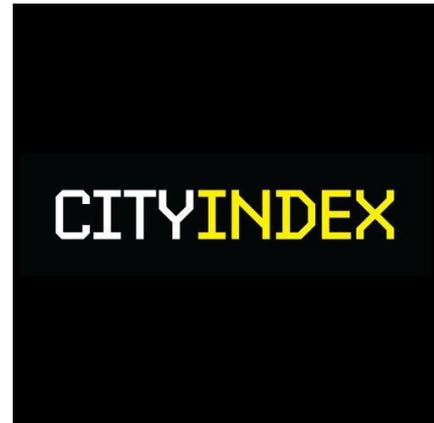


# *City Index's Quality Assurance Manager enhances skills at LCT to enable more effective supervision of staff.*

## 1. Client

City Index is a world-leading brokerage firm which provides online trading platform for investors to buy and sell financial instruments (tradable assets). City index provides the software and technology to enable investors to undertake spread betting, Contract For Difference (CFD) trading, and Foreign Exchange (FOREX) trading. Established in 1983, City Index has grown to become a household name, with over 400 employees worldwide and offices in the UK, Singapore, China, Dubai, and Australia. More than two million trades are carried out each month, across fifty countries, using the City Index trading platform.<sup>1</sup>



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## 2. Delegate

The function of the IT department within City Index is, in essence, three-fold:

- 1) To maintain existing software and make sure that it is both up-to-date and works effectively.
- 2) To make relevant and necessary enhancements to existing software to improve the experience for users.
- 3) To develop new software and ensure that City Index continues to lead the way as an online trading platform.

Working in the IT department, and as a part of the process of software lifecycle development, the Quality Assurance / Software Testing team is responsible for testing software to make sure that it works as required. There are 20-25 people in 8 sub-teams testing different pieces of software at any one time. The Quality Assurance manager has the responsibility for overall Quality Assurance. His role is to manage the QA department and includes duties that are traditionally associated with the HR function:

- Overseeing quality assurance
- Managing the QA testers (the person who is testing the software) in each of the different software sub-teams
- Hiring staff
- Managing performance
- Managing salaries
- Making improvements to the way we do things
- Automating tasks
- Business process improvements to quality assurance
- Resolving people Issues
- Formalising training requirements
- Managing large projects

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cityindex.co.uk/about-us.aspx>

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“My job is to ensure effective quality assurance for all software. In doing this, it is important for me to understand the progress made by each of the teams (by acting as line-manager to the QA testers) and to make sure that everyone is motivated to do their job effectively.”

The Quality Assurance Manager, having worked in a technical capacity before promotion to management, was conscious of the importance of developing strong people management skills. Having had no

formal training, he initially turned to popular books on the subject. However, he eventually turned to LCT to provide the requisite training through a short and intensive course:

*“I’ve been quite a technical person in my career and I’ve also worked as a consultant for several years. This transition into a manager has been for the last two and a half years but I’ve never really had any proper [formal] training in that. There are quite a few areas within my management style on which I have been trying to improve by reading books or going through material but I still felt the pace at which I was learning by going through material was not as quick as I really needed to be doing. So I thought it good if I could take a step back, go for a week off, focus on some skills and get some professional training. I could then go back and reflect and then maybe make some changes to my style.”*

### 3. Course (Supervisory Skills)

With his job role involving supervision, and LCT’s course most closely reflecting his needs, the QA Manager decided to opt for our five day Supervisory Skills training course.

When asked why he choose LCT, the reason was simple: “The course content. The syllabus was more in line with what I wanted.”

The course had especially been designed to help team leaders and managers develop skills in constructively monitoring employees in the fulfilment of tasks. In order to do so, it is essential that supervisors develop strong interpersonal, communication and people management skills, and are able to manage time and stress effectively.



LCT’s Supervisory Skills course reflected these requirements, with five main objectives:

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- 1) To develop verbal communication skills.
- 2) To understand what influence is and learn how to influence others in a positive and constructive way.
- 3) To develop assertiveness skills to cope confidently with different people.
- 4) To solve problems creatively and develop sound decision making techniques.
- 5) To increase effectiveness of time management and to learn how to control stress

For this course, LCT utilised two consultants to ensure the training was stimulating over the five day duration. The learning environment and training style stood out for the QA Manager:

“It was not simply about sitting in the training session listening to consultants. The training was more participative... I liked the way we were asked to come up with our own views on topics which would then be discussed. It’s been a nice, casual environment which assisted in my learning.”

With a small class size, the delegate felt that he was able to take advantage of consultants’ openness and expertise:

“They were really wonderful people. I was able to ask specific questions which are very close to me. If there had been a larger group I might not have had that opportunity.”

Furthermore, the consultants were able to tailor the material to the needs of the delegates’ making it practical and applicable rather than theoretical.

“The examples were really good. I could relate them to my workplace and I came away with a number of ideas I felt I could implement on my return.”

### 4. Result

Following the training, the QA Manager felt he had developed as a manager in a number of key areas:

1. Improved confidence. Over the course of the training he had learned the importance of confidence in the workplace, particularly when assuming the role of supervisor or manager. “I’m going to reflect on this and return with greater confidence which should help me in carrying out my responsibilities.”
2. Assertiveness. Having spent a day understanding what assertiveness really means, and its importance in the workplace, the delegate felt comfortable incorporating it into his management style so that he would be able to give more effective feedback to the staff he supervises: “I felt there were a few changes I could make there.”
3. Positivity and motivation. This was also a key learning as he came to understand the profound link between positivity and motivation on both yourself – and on others: “Usually I am very positive but I realised I could be even more positive. If I’m motivated automatically, I can motivate others.”





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4. Effective people management. This was regarded as one of his most important objectives, and a skill-set that he was keen to develop. “I asked the consultant for some feedback in this area and he was able to give me some good guidance. I now have ideas to take with me on my return to the workplace.”
5. Time management was an unexpected avenue of growth for the QA Manager. Left unchecked, many daily activities can end up stealing valuable time away from more important work. Following this module, which focused on prioritising and organising according to goals, he came away with the ability to view activities through a time-management lense. “I have also learned there are times when I need to close my emails as they are a distraction to the important work at hand.”
6. Insight - the course also gave him greater self-awareness. Discussions with the consultants made him aware of the importance of not allowing emotions to interfere with the logic of the task: “I knew there was a problem in that area but I could not specifically say what it was until now. That’s something I need to practice.”

Taken together, these changes amounted to a larger change in management style that the participant will take back with him to the workplace. With training complete, he summed up his experience at LCT: “I’m really happy with the course. I will definitely recommend LCT to my friends and colleagues”. As for the future, “It’s all in my hands now really.”

### 5. About LCT

LCT is the UK’s leading corporate training provider offering over 100 short training courses in Advanced Management, Law, Oil and Gas, Management Skills, Operations Management, Finance, Human Resources, Public Relations, Sales and Secretarial Skills. One of our most popular subject areas is Soft Skills. We offer a comprehensive suite of courses to help participants develop their skills within this area, ranging from five days to three weeks. Courses include Essential Management Skills; Senior Management Skills; Motivational Leadership and Building Successful Teams; Effective Communication and Inspirational Presentations; Influencing Skills, Assertiveness, and Negotiation; Supervisory Skills; Neuro-linguistic Programming and Emotional Intelligence; Coaching and Mentoring; and Customer Service Management. LCT is a recognised provider of the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and part of their quality-assured network of learning providers. Many of our Management Skills courses are recognised by the ILM.

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