

## Royal Mail celebrates sales partnership with landmark award

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Royal Mail is celebrating a first in professional selling by winning its third major award, marking six years of sales progression and transformation with the Institute of Sales Professionals (ISP).

Their latest Investor in Sales award, recently presented by the ISP, demonstrates a long-standing commitment by salespeople at Royal Mail and Parcelforce to professional development which has been strengthened year on year.

Royal Mail realised that its sales operations needed to keep up with new technology, a changing client profile and other important developments such as social selling. As a result, its partnership with the ISP has been distinguished by a campaign of pioneering leadership focused on customer care, sales skills and ethical selling.

Jon Nicholson, UK sales director, Royal Mail and Parcelforce said: "Royal Mail is a legacy brand going through a significant transformation, and our salespeople have been at the frontline of that change for a number of years now. Access to the Institute of Sales Professionals, the resources available and specifically the webinars, has enabled our salespeople to learn from outside influences, practitioners and other sales professionals that I believe would be difficult to replicate.

"They have brought an awareness of other industries or challenges that other sales organisations face and with it increased both empathy and resilience. It is almost a by-product of the core reason for the webinar, but in our context has been incredibly important."

The Investor in Sales award is gained when at least 75% of a sales team passes the ISP's Fair registration exam which tests selling skills, knowledge, professional ethics and decision making.

The exam has been taken every two years to make sure that selling skills remain up to date, hence this six-year milestone, and Jon Nicholson said the award is another example of professional development at Royal Mail and Parcelforce which supports their drive for integrity and a focus on positive customer experience.

"Trust is the cornerstone of Royal Mail and Parcelforce, it's what we have traded on for hundreds of years. Sadly we know that sales as a sector carries some stereotypes we all wish it didn't, and therefore for me, when buyers realise that not only are our salespeople part of a trusted brand, they are accredited in that too, then it helps remove a psychological objection that the buyer might have.

"In many prospecting pitches we talk about our membership of the ISP, and specifically completion of the ethics exam as a reason to trust the salesperson and us as an organisation."

In 2016, Royal Mail helped to set up the first, degree-level business-to-business sales apprenticeship programme, along with the Institute of Sales Professionals and were

recognised with a Princess Royal Training Award.

The company built on this learning ethos with a wider drive for sales qualifications, professional registration and career development.

Jon Nicholson added: “We have had some remarkable young people coming through the apprenticeship scheme, and it is amazing to see them growing in their careers. Naturally some have left us to go on to other companies which hopefully is a positive move for them and allows them to continue to progress, and for those that are still with us, many have progressed into other areas in the sales function, and some have widened their skill set further and are working in product development. An injection of early talent into our organisation has had a halo effect on the teams that those apprentices were, or still are, a part of, which is brilliant to see.

“I am also very focused on bringing in raw talent, young people who may not have had the best start in life, or might not have the GCSEs they require for a start in a professional career, but have the characteristics to make it as great salespeople. I intend to use sales apprenticeships to be a vehicle for that too, as I think they are an amazing way of garnering future talent, whilst benefitting the organisation.”

Looking to the future, Jon reflected that developing expert, professional salespeople will only become more important: “Our customers do not need order takers, they need expertise, guidance and trust. Without skilled salespeople you can’t provide those key components of a good trading relationship. I am of the belief that whilst you can be a successful seller on inherent qualities, those who are also skilled and practice that skill can be exceptional. In my mind it is no different to anything else. If you want to be a great footballer, you learn and you practice. If you want to be a great teacher, you learn and you practice. Great salespeople do the same.”

Patrick Joiner, managing director of the Institute of Sales Professionals congratulated Jon and his team at Royal Mail and Parcelforce for their hard work and dedication to professional development and sales ethics, and concluded:

"Royal Mail is the first sales organisation to achieve a third Investor in Sales award - the result of six years' focus on providing the best possible customer experience. We are proud to be partners with Jon Nicholson and the teams at Royal Mail and Parcelforce and to support them in their campaign to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct in the way they sell and interact with customers. Many congratulations."

Source: [Royal Mail](#)

