



Joseph  
Joseph

## Joseph Joseph: powering conversation and culture



Susie Burt,  
Head of People & Culture

**Sector:** Retail & Manufacturing

**Number of employees:** 200

**Reason for change:** Rapid growth and rising headcount

**Results (less than 6 months in):**  
+96% adoption

### The customer

Joseph Joseph is a global houseware brand renowned for its innovative, high-quality designs. Key products include contemporary kitchenware and bathroom accessories, as well as intelligent laundry, storage, and waste solutions – all of which are available in major department stores and via the company's ecommerce channel.

Founded in 2003 by twin brothers Richard and Antony Joseph, Joseph Joseph is both a fast-growth company and internationally recognised brand.

“I believe OpenBlend will help us to **retain talent by enabling effective conversations** that shape ongoing development opportunities.”



## Key challenges:

- Paper-based annual appraisals
- Data not centrally collated or managed
- Performance reviews tied to pay
- Existing approach not aligned with cultural aspirations
- Need for greater focus on development

**“We recognised that a more people-centric approach was needed in order to build culture while supporting development and retention.”**

## Before OpenBlend...

Having reached a pivotal headcount of 200 people in early 2022 – and with the business continuing to scale rapidly – Joseph Joseph created a dedicated People & Culture team in order to steer a strategic focus on development and the employee experience.

Susie Burt, who now leads that team, explains what performance management looked like before OpenBlend: “Annual appraisals had been the norm and to a certain degree, that had worked as a basic performance model given we were still a small, albeit fast growing, business.

[But] as our headcount surpassed 200, it became clear that we needed to move away from annual performance reviews – and also break the link to pay. We recognised that a more people-centric approach was needed in order to build culture while supporting development and retention.”

## Objectives

To address these, Susie and her team outlined three key objectives:

- Transition from annual appraisals to continuous conversations that support great employee experiences, attract talent, and drive retention
- Encourage managers to think about employee development more broadly – and beyond just formal training
- Engage an HR tool that is built-for-purpose, employee-driven, and easy-to-use.

## OpenBlend: “the perfect next step”

So how did Susie hear about OpenBlend? “I was introduced [to OpenBlend] by a colleague who had used it in a previous role at Dr Martens. We did look at two other providers but OpenBlend really stood out as the



## Why OpenBlend?

Built to support employees as human beings

Immediate connection with the team

Clear understanding of challenges – and how to solve them

Strong user experience (UX)

Ability to customise and add modules over time

Employee-driven

OpenBlend is an amazing application and such a worthwhile investment by our business to support meaningful and constructive conversations around development, performance, and wellbeing. OpenBlend provides a great framework, encourages reflection, and is opening opportunities for more inclusive, open, and comfortable discussions around subjects that may otherwise not come up or feel difficult to raise. It is super easy to navigate but best of all, it encourages employee ownership for personal and career development. If using OpenBlend for Yourself or for your Team it adds value, whether you are just beginning your career and development journey or already have heaps of experience.

Alix, Customer Service (manager)

perfect next step in terms of synergy and ability to support our goals.”

Susie also recalls an immediate connection with the OpenBlend team: “They demonstrated a clear understanding of our needs and were able to showcase examples of how the platform is helping other customers in a similar position to Joseph Joseph. That was really compelling.”

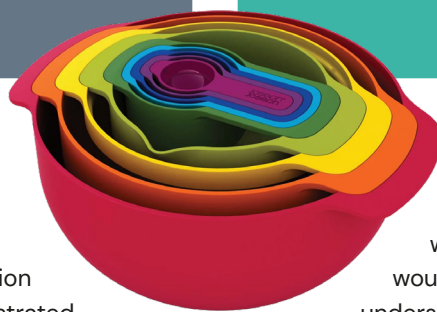
The real clincher, though, was OpenBlend’s ability to facilitate manager–employee conversations that go beyond objective–setting and performance ratings to include broader discussions around wellbeing, motivation, and development.

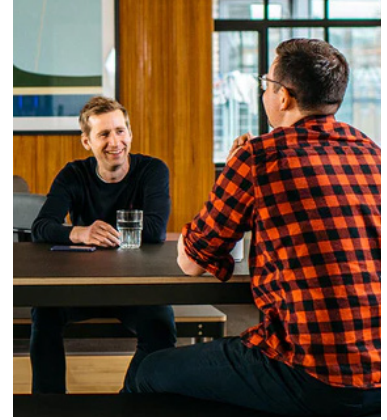
Susie explains: “By enabling broad conversations that

focus as much on wellbeing and motivation as they do performance, we were confident that OpenBlend would enable our managers to better understand the unique needs and wants of individual employees – and increase performance and retention as a result.”

## Leading the launch

OpenBlend was rolled out to all employees a few months later, with Susie emphasising that “it was exactly the right time for us as a business. We were still able to fit all our managers onto one universal training session and that helped to create interest and ensure everyone was aware not just of the tool, but the benefits to people.”





OpenBlend is a great platform to encourage more honest and reflective dialogue with my manager. The blend drivers in particular are very useful in initiating what can sometimes be awkward conversations. Having them form the predefined talking points for our one-to-ones has ensured that time is as productive as possible.

Dylan, Design (employee)



96%

of Joseph Joseph employees have already signed up to use OpenBlend

The OpenBlend team took a leading role in delivering that training for managers and employees, something that Susie cites as a key benefit: "We're a small HR team so the fact that OpenBlend ran the training sessions and provided hands-on support was a huge help. It was like having an extra person in our team - and several months on, it still feels that way."

Susie even details how the OpenBlend team chose Joseph Joseph's Customer Success Manager based on the company's brand and HR team personalities: "The whole experience is very tailor-made in that sense."

### So what's the verdict from managers and employees?

"The platform has been very well received," says Susie. "The feedback we're getting is that it's easy to use and people are already finding value in having more time to talk to their managers about their wellbeing and development."

Likewise, explains Susie, managers are also learning more about their people - and the factors that motivate them as individuals.

To learn how OpenBlend can support regular and effective conversations in your organisation, get in touch with our team

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