

# From annual appraisals to coaching conversations

In conversation with **Matt Tipping**,  
CEO, Jeroboams



## The customer

Jeroboams is a family-owned retailer that prides itself on being London's local wine merchant. Established in 1985, the company operates eight shops across the Capital and sells to a global audience online.

Known for its strong commitment to customer service, Jeroboams provides its customers with expert knowledge, advice - and a friendly face. The company also services restaurants and corporate events as part of its wholesale arm, delivering a full range of wines to meet every taste and requirement.



## The challenge

Today, Jeroboams' headcount stands at ~65 team members who work across the company's retail shops and Islington headquarters. Prior to partnering with OpenBlend in 2018, Matt explains that Jeroboams was a fairly structured and hierarchical business. Performance management typically consisted of one annual appraisal that focused on objective-setting and ratings, and team members tended not to have interim conversations with their managers.

"Due to the structure of the business at that time, a number of silos had arisen that were impeding us from achieving the open and collaborative culture that was essential to our continued growth and success. We needed our team members to communicate more so that we could optimise their development. That was the number one priority."

In particular, Matt and the Jeroboams team wanted to create a culture of coaching that would equip team members with the knowledge and expertise needed to support a first-class customer experience. "To achieve that, we had to transition away from the annual appraisal approach to one that would put continuous coaching front and centre."

## Case study

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Matt Tipping, CEO, Jeroboams



### The solution

The Jeroboams team began searching for a technology solution that would not only support the tracking and achievement of performance objectives, but which would enable broad, coaching-led conversations between managers and their direct reports.

Matt explains how, having identified a shortlist of three providers, the team was immediately drawn to OpenBlend:

“We instantly liked the fact that OpenBlend facilitates broad conversations that touch on a variety of topics beyond just performance. That really aligned with our core goal of helping to develop people through a coaching-led culture. The platform is purposefully designed to lead with the conversation and that really spoke to what we were trying to achieve.”

The professional training services offered by OpenBlend were another driving factor in Jeroboams’ decision to engage. As Matt says: “We were suddenly asking managers without coaching experience to become coaching leaders. That’s a big change for any business so the fact that OpenBlend provides change management support – as well as ongoing training for managers and team members – was seen as a key benefit.”

### The results

Fast forward four years and Jeroboams has undergone a complete transformation from its annual appraisal days - so much so, that team members are not only having more frequent and effective conversations with their managers, they’re actually leading those discussions and helping to shape their own experiences and development.

“We’ve effectively done a 180 in terms of how we’re approaching people management and development today versus four years ago.”

So what’s been the biggest benefit to date? “Definitely culture and helping our team members to feel more valued. Without OpenBlend we wouldn’t have managed to get our culture to where it is now. Jeroboams is now a company where people talk to each other and recognise one another for their achievements. There are fewer silos and information flows better. OpenBlend is very much the driving force behind all of that.”



# 94%

**of team members have used OpenBlend to facilitate their one-to-ones over the past year**



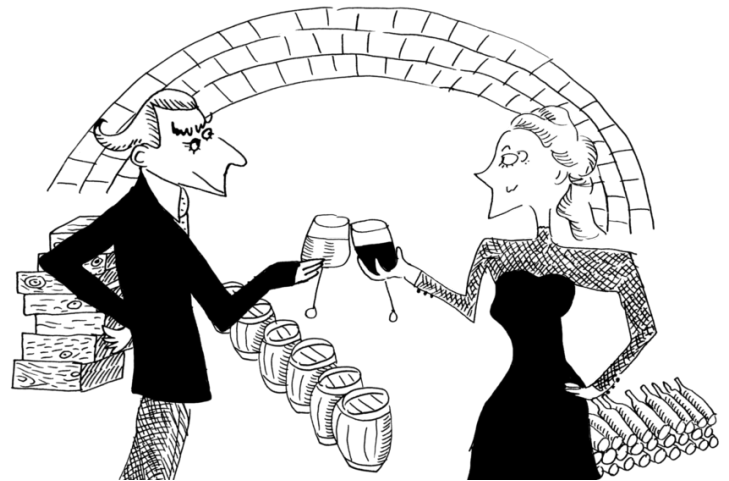
## Case study

Of course, embedding a culture change such as this called for strong user engagement - something that is being seen across the board at Jeroboams. Ninety four percent of team members have used OpenBlend to facilitate their one-to-ones over the past year, and a similar 92% of managers are actively using the platform.

Likewise, Matt says OpenBlend's 'high five' functionality has also proven popular. In the past year alone, eighty five percent of team members have been recognised and a further 80% have recognised one or more of their colleagues.

"The high five functionality has helped us to further break down silos as sales personnel are now able to recognise their team members in the support team and so on. It's a great tool for reaffirming our culture and building that all-important sense of togetherness."

Workforce wellbeing has also steadily improved since the implementation of OpenBlend: Jeroboams' average



happiness score now sits at 72% having risen from 62% in 2018. As Matt explains, "We know this because we have the data to prove it. We're able to make informed decisions that better serve our team members and the wider business. That's not something we had before engaging OpenBlend and it's been hugely useful - especially during COVID and the ensuing uncertainty."

**"What I really like is that the partnership continues to evolve – and in fact, it's got better over time. The OpenBlend team works with us in a very collaborative way. They actively ask for and act on our feedback and there's very much a feeling that you're on the same team working towards the same goals"**

To learn more about the OpenBlend platform and how it can support conversations in your organisation, get in touch.

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