

Building Adaptability Ahead of the Curve: How an EMEA Commercial Team Prepared for High-Stakes Change Through AQ Data

INDUSTRY	ORG SIZE	DURATION	SCOPE	CLIENT
Healthcare / Medical Device	Global enterprise	8 weeks (contract to delivery)	89 participants, EMEA Commercial	Global healthcare business (anonymized)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When a global healthcare business’s EMEA commercial team faced a convergence of strategic commercial priorities, intensifying market pressure, and employee survey signals, AQai Certified Partners Steve Botterill and Lucy Quick of Resourceful People Group deployed a data-informed adaptability program across 89 participants — delivering the team’s first shared AQ language, targeted development insights across eight sub-group cohorts, and a follow-on capability that extended into the organization’s global HR leadership.

ABOUT THE CLIENT

A global healthcare business operating across multiple EMEA markets, this organization is part of a diversified industrial technology group and serves healthcare facilities — including hospitals and health centres — with specialist products and services that support clinical outcomes. Its commercial function spans field sales, marketing, and technical services teams distributed across multiple countries and language groups. At the time of the engagement, the business was entering a significant new phase of commercial activity that placed the adaptability of its commercial workforce firmly at the centre of its performance agenda.

SITUATION

The EMEA commercial leadership of a global healthcare business identified an emerging tension. Employee survey results had surfaced themes of resilience, change fatigue, and uneven team cohesion — signals that warranted attention in their own right, and that carried additional weight given the organization’s upcoming commercial cycle and the continued intensity of the healthcare market.

With approximately 89 people spread across multiple countries and functions — field sales, marketing, technical services, and senior leaders — the team operated in a linguistically and culturally diverse environment where a shared framework for navigating change was absent. Talent and leadership decisions were being made without visibility into how different cohorts within the team were actually experiencing and responding to the pace of change around them. The disconnect between what the employee data was signalling and what the organization understood about its own adaptability profile had become a commercial priority to close.

IMPLICATION

Left unaddressed, the organization risked entering a high-stakes commercial cycle — with intensifying market pressure and new commercial demands — without clarity on where its people were most exposed. The employee voice had already signalled the need for action. Without a structured response, declining resilience and fragmented team cohesion could undermine commercial execution at precisely the moment the business needed its people at their most adaptive.

APPROACH

Assessment Design

AQai’s individual and cohort-level AQ® assessments were deployed across the full EMEA commercial team of 89 participants, led by Steve Botterill and Lucy Quick, AQai® Certified Partners at Resourceful People Group. Assessments were completed in advance of the in-person engagement and configured to generate individual AQ profiles alongside team, sub-function, and demographic cohort reports. Cohorts included field sales (56 participants, drawn from a range of sub-regions), marketing (7), technical services (6), and senior leaders (26) — with additional segmentations by tenure, age group, and geographical region — enabling a multi-dimensional view of adaptability across the team.

Engagement Structure

Delivery was structured in two phases. First, a 90-minute virtual preparation session via Miro oriented participants to AQ concepts and provided structured context for how to engage with their individual results. Second, a full-day in-person workshop was co-facilitated at the team’s EMEA commercial conference — a multilingual, multi-country gathering that required careful design to ensure accessibility and active participation across language groups throughout the day.

Tailoring & Integration

The program was shaped by a close reading of employee survey themes and the organization’s specific commercial pressures. Although all 15 sub-dimensions of the ACE model were reviewed as part of the diagnostic process, the workshop was built around five AQ dimensions — Hope, Resilience, Unlearning, Mindset, and Team Support — chosen for their direct relevance to a commercial team entering a period of accelerating change. Facilitated exercises integrated team-building activities, AQ data reviews, and structured reflection cycles. The session closed with a personal action planning component: each participant committed to two individual development actions, linked to a defined follow-up process in which line managers were briefed to initiate development conversations within the following two weeks.

ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

The engagement was notable for its ambition within a constrained timeframe — from initial scoping to in-person delivery in eight weeks. Facilitators adapted in real time to operational changes including a start time confirmed the night before the event and an end time adjusted twice during the session itself. Working across multiple languages and with 89 participants simultaneously, the design relied on Miro-based pre-work, structured team activities, and a careful balance of data insight with practical application. That same adaptability — demonstrated by the delivery team in the room — became part of the story shared with participants on the day.

KEY METRICS

89

Participants

8

Weeks (contract to delivery)

8

Sub-groups analysed

5

AQ dimensions in focus

RESULTS

Primary Outcome

For the first time, the 89-person EMEA commercial team had a shared, science-backed language for adaptability — and the data to ground it. AQ® assessment results revealed that while the team’s overall distribution followed a broadly typical pattern, the range from lowest to highest scores was notably wide. This width, more than any aggregate figure, became the actionable insight: it surfaced where the organization’s development investment would yield the highest return and reframed how the business thought about readiness for its upcoming commercial cycle.

Supporting Outcomes

- Senior leaders were identified as displaying following rather than leading traits in relation to adaptability — a significant finding that reframed how the organization thought about where leadership development was most urgently needed.
- Hope — the AQ dimension measuring an individual’s belief in future possibility and capacity to find alternative paths to goals — emerged as an underdeveloped asset across the team, with particular implications for readiness ahead of an important new commercial cycle. The practical resonance of the session was reflected in one participant’s unsolicited request for a specific workshop activity to become a standing feature at future team meetings.
- Team Support scores outpaced Company Support scores and showed no significant gender bias — a structurally positive signal. However, meaningful proportions of the team indicated elevated work-related stress and reduced psychological safety, prompting targeted plans for follow-on support.
- Employees with fewer than six years of service registered as meaningfully more adaptable than longer-tenured cohorts — a finding with direct implications for talent strategy and development prioritization across the team.
- Within two weeks of the workshop, all participants had created personal action plans linked to their AQ® profiles, with managers briefed to initiate development conversations — embedding the data into the team’s day-to-day operating rhythm.

What Happened Next

The engagement expanded in scope and depth. A follow-on AQ® program was commissioned for the organization’s senior global HR team (11 participants), incorporating individual debriefs and a cohort-level analysis for the Global VP of HR. The regional HR Director who had originally championed the program subsequently completed her Level 1 AQai® certification and began work toward Level 2 — signalling a deliberate shift from external delivery toward sustained in-house adaptability capability.

“We should have done this on day one, not day three.”

— Global VP of HR, EMEA Commercial Conference

Delivered by

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ABOUT AQAI

AQai is the world’s leading platform for measuring and developing adaptability. Backed by science and built for modern organizations, our assessments help leaders and teams understand, predict, and grow their capacity to adapt — so they can thrive in any environment.

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