



**NCS –
Developing young
people's skills for
work and life**



National Citizen Service (NCS) is a UK government funded youth program for 16-17 year-olds, with a commitment to improving social mobility, social inclusion and social good in the country.

| Location | Size of organization | Industry | Learning stage journey |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| United Kingdom | 10,000+ employees | Government and public sector | School |



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| <p>What was the business need?</p> | <p>NCS exists to engage, unite and empower young people, building their confidence so they can go out there and achieve their dreams, no matter where they're from or what their background is. From the life skills they develop to the friends they make, NCS' ambition is to give teenagers an opportunity to unleash their potential, build their self-belief and prepare them for life after school. NCS was founded in 2009 to help young people achieve their potential and build bridges between communities. Their first program had only 158 participants, but, since then, over 600,000 young people have taken part.</p> <p>Upskilling is vital to NCS, particularly due to the organization's culture which consists of employees that are eager to share knowledge. However, upskilling is also carried out through formal training and strategic partnerships with organizations who buy into NCS' mission. Moreover, NCS is hoping to bring more graduates from the NCS program into the organization as staff. It is possible to build great teams that have technical capabilities even when they're not paid the highest salaries and one reason for this is the attractiveness of upskilling opportunities. It is critical to focus on the culture of the organization and how NCS can equip both program participants and team members with the skills needed to grow their careers and continue to support the organization's mission.</p> |
| <p>What program was implemented?</p> | <p>NCS offers a range of services to support young people in developing skills for work and life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially mixed residential programs and project-based learning • Skills focused activities and session that can be delivered in school to support co-curricular goals • Year-round community based social action and volunteering that deliver impact, and build social capital and teamwork • Online engagement and digital experiences that complement and deepen the impact of NCS • Essential skills and employer support packages to enhance how young people are engaged and brought into the workforce |
| <p>Did the organization face any challenges?</p> | <p>During COVID-19, NCS repurposed their business having historically been primarily focused on residential experiences. Their 'Staying Connected' hub had 290,000 unique visitors and their 'Keep Doing Good' initiative amassed over 200,000 volunteer hours. Moreover, they had 16,500 people take part in their autumn program which was higher than ever, and over 50% more than in 2019. Finally, NCS also supported 500 schools and colleges with NCS content benefitting over 87,000 young people. All of this shows that it is possible to be successful when transitioning a business in the face of COVID.</p> |
| <p>How has the impact of the program been measured?</p> | <p>As a government funded program the ROI is looked at in terms of economic benefit of the activity, which is calculated based on a mixture of assessing impact of essential skills such as teamwork and leadership development, as well as the number of hours spent delivering volunteering and social action. The latest evaluation shows that for every GBP £1 invested there is a return of up to GBP £3.49. They also invest in qualitative research and evaluation and draw this out in case studies that they seek to make engaging and relatable to young people as well as other key stakeholders.</p> |