

How can employees be empowered to contribute to business success?

For many organisations, improving productivity and increasing innovation is an important challenge. But how can UK companies step change and then continually improve productivity? For some, the answer has been through investment in areas such as new technologies or mergers and acquisitions.

In Unipart, we took a different approach. For over 25 years we have been developing a system of continuous improvement and innovation that has delivered productivity improvements both in our company and for the clients with whom we've shared it — all based on employee engagement. We call it The Unipart Way.

We started with the belief that productivity comes from the innovative ideas and the problem solving skills of people across the entire organisation. Engaging that collective 'brain power' through "a new way of thinking" has enabled us to do more for our customers, reduce costs in all our operations and introduce innovation.

Over 25 years ago, we opened The Unipart U, one of Europe's first in-house universities. The U has a mission to "train, develop and inspire people to achieve world class performance". As our company grew and diversified globally, we introduced Faculties on the Floor – learning centres situated right on the shop floor — in all of our operations.

The best thinking, learning and practical expertise from our company and from the best companies in the world was brought together in a system we call The Unipart Way.

Within Unipart, The Unipart Way drives operational excellence, customer engagement and employee engagement. Today, through our consultancy arm, we're also teaching and coaching The Unipart Way in a diverse range of global clients. They are benefitting from increased productivity as well as highly engaged people who deliver continuous improvements in their businesses.

John Neill is Chairman and Group Chief Executive of Unipart