

## INVESTOR IN PEOPLE CASE STUDY: Rok Yeovil



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*“Investors in People has really enabled us to measure and improve upon our performance in certain areas in order to achieve one of our major objectives – which is to be ‘best employer’. Our people are the key factor because it makes us a successful employer as well as a successful business.”*

**Sarah Buckley, Regional Customer Leader**

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### Background

**Size:** 101 people

**Sector:** Building

**Locations:** Yeovil

**Status:** First recognised as an Investor in People in March 2003. Successfully reviewed, May 2006.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

### The organisation

Rok is a national company with a turnover of more than £689 million – and aims to become the ‘Nation’s Local Builder’ by operating from a network of offices in major towns across the UK, using dedicated teams who live and work in their communities.

Rok Yeovil is deeply rooted in the Somerset town, having its origins in a company that was founded there as F R Bartlett in 1870.

Led by regional director Chris Hyde and operating across Somerset, Dorset and West Wiltshire, the company has achieved considerable growth since adopting the Rok brand in 2001. Through its four teams – Maintenance, Building, Contracts and Affordable Housing – Rok Yeovil handles schemes and projects that range from routine maintenance to large ‘new building’ in its main sectors of social housing, education, health and leisure.

In keeping with its company ethos, Rok Yeovil takes particular pride in being “involved and accountable” within its local area and in building long-term relationships with its customers.

“We care about our neighbourhoods earning their trust and respect,” says Sarah Buckley.

“It’s all about living and working in the community in which we operate. So ideally, no person has to travel more than an hour to work.”

### The challenge

In common with other Rok offices around the UK, Rok Yeovil needed to find effective ways of managing growth.

“One of our corporate goals is to be ‘the best employer’,” Sarah Buckley says.

“We therefore needed to be able to measure the process of people development – from induction to appraisal, training, career opportunities and how we communicate with each other. From the Yeovil base, we now have around 20 ‘live’ building sites. All of these need managing. We want happy, loyal and well trained people in order to deliver our promises to customers.”

“We had many of these core processes in place, but we looked to Investors in People to give us the structures to move to the next level, to realise our vision of being ‘best employer’.

### The strategy

Linking with an Investors in People adviser, the company has worked hard to refine its systems to align training more closely to the needs of the business and to ensure that employees gain an increased awareness of their roles in the long-term success of Rok Yeovil.

Competency profiles and job descriptions, for example, have been enhanced to provide formal written records of people’s progress within the company. General competencies of all staff are now linked to essential performance indicators.

Not only does every new staff member attend a three-day ‘Taste of Rok’ induction, to set the standards in terms of vision and values, the programme is now repeated to enable longer serving staff to experience the same and remind themselves ‘of Rok’s values.

Since the re-branding in 2001, Rok Yeovil has encouraged a workplace ethos that has been built around strong and positive leadership and an open and friendly culture where general terms and conditions of all staff have been ‘equalised’ to encourage ‘one-team’ thinking. Staff members carry a credit-card sized booklet that sets out the company’s core values in areas such as team-building, customer care, finance, health and safety and delivery of projects.

“Most people carry the card in their wallets,” Sarah Buckley. “It’s a daily reminder of our vision ‘to be the nation’s local builder’ – and how it is to be achieved.”

Training remains at the heart of the company’s success.

Staff use appraisals to agree not just performance targets but their own development needs. Rok now actively encourages potential managers to apply for a programme known as ‘Leadership at Altitude’. A new initiative ‘The Rok Way’ helps staff through the training process on a day-to-day basis.

### The results

By developing long-term relationships with valued customers, Rok Yeovil has steadily increased its annual turnover to £32 million in the past five years and is now the major provider of social housing within its area. The company has recently secured two more significant contracts – one of which equates to 22% of the local market for social housing new building.

Rok Yeovil’s record of staff retention is one of the best within the group. “The cost-benefit of a happy and loyal staff is that we save considerably on recruitment costs,” says Sarah Buckley.

Across the company, staff have improved their career prospects through training and development.

Graham Tucker, for example, joined as a college trainee in 1999 – and now leads the commercial team in the Affordable Housing section. Jake Snell is now a site manager, having joined as a carpenter in 1997.

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