

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE CASE STUDY: THE EDEN PROJECT



EDEN PROJECT BLOSSOMS THANKS TO STAFF

A visitor attraction with a difference, The Eden Project is more than a green theme park that celebrates the colourful world of plants.

Behind the impressive glass domes, Investors in People (IiP) discovered a working environment and management style that adds an extra dimension to visitors' experience.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Despite the constant flow of visiting people, which is estimated at 1.25 million per year, the IiP Assessor witnessed a workplace where staff prosper and flourish under a supportive management team.

The attraction is the vision of social entrepreneur Tim Smit who opened the complex in March 2001 with the aim of bringing people and plants closer together. Thousands of species of flora from around the globe now thrive under three huge glasshouses, which replicate different climate zones.

Key to the success of The Eden Project has been the way that management has embraced the Investors in People philosophy.

The workforce is seen as a valuable consultee in the continuous drive to set higher standards. This is transparently delivered by the management's innovative use of 'Free Speech Days' and 'The Members Assembly'. Both are platforms for staff to raise best practice and implement new measures in partnership with management.

This 'bottom up' approach to management empowers and engages staff resulting in ownership and improved motivation. Staff also highlighted the regular team meetings: "They make you clear about our team's targets and how that links to Eden's aims," staff said.

Crucially staff are encouraged, as part of the company's commitment to personal development, to participate in in-house training as well as study nationally recognised qualifications such as NVQs, degrees and postgraduate certificates.

Management at The Eden Project promote cross departmental working, which is vital if companies are to operate to their full capacity. This has been addressed through internal awareness schemes called 'Tricky Days' and 'Foundation Days'. During these events staff would learn more about the wider work of Eden. Staff commented: "We had a trial day to give us experience in other areas. That gave me a better understanding of the whole site."

The creative use of field trips, another best practice tool, has resulted in improvements to a plant life exhibition. One member of staff commented: "The presentation of crops in the warm temperature biome was developed by staff following visits to the areas where they grow naturally and gaining input from local experts."

Eden Project spokesperson, Leah Brewer, said: "The IiP standards have helped us to remain focussed on the development of the employees and subsequently the future of the organisation."

“We have used the assessment process to highlight areas of great achievement and those that we need to work harder at; in essence it acts as the company’s appraisal.”

“The revised standards will challenge our leadership style and aid our future development. The accreditation reinforces the philosophy of what, how and why we develop our employees. We look forward to future liaison with liP.”

Investors in People Assessor Clive Tabiner, said: “The directors and managers recognise that training and development activities underpin the success of the business”. The benefits delivered through training are monitored in a variety of ways to ensure the needs of the organisation are met whether it is through customer feedback or visitor activity.

The development of systems and resources, including computer based training and health and safety, has enabled the organisation to benefit from partnerships with colleges and development agencies which are important to the progression of the organisation.

Background information

Investors in People is all about recognising that people are at the heart of organisations. Getting the best out of staff has a direct impact on the success of organisations.

The Investors in People accreditation helps organisations identify and implement proven methods to help staff achieve organisational objectives. Thousands of organisations across the South West continue to recognise the value delivered by Investing in People today.

Quality South West are the Investors in People Assessment & Recognition Centre for the South West. Contact our Advisory Team on (01452) 413641 to find out more.