

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE CASE STUDY:

MARKEY BUILDIERS



INVESTING IN PEOPLE TO DELIVER QUALITY RECRUITMENT

Background

Size: 45 people

Sector: construction

Locations: Gloucester

Status: Initially achieved Investors in People recognition, March 2005. Successfully achieved re-recognition in December 2006. At the same time, the company achieved successful recognition against the IIP Leadership and Management Model.



Overall impact

Investors in People and the Leadership and Management Model both focus on the good practice standards for the way you treat people – the way you recruit, the way you manage, communicate, train and develop your People and give them opportunities for career progression. We don't get bogged down on all the criteria. For us, it all boils down to looking after our people – and everyone wins.

Phil Rasdale, Training and Development Manager

The organisation

Tradesman carpenter Brendan Markey started his business as a sole trader in the early 1960s. Markey Builders is now a multi-million pound company engaged in the design and build of projects across Gloucestershire. Principal clients include Housing Associations and local authorities. The company has also done work for at local schools and hospitals. Markey Builders began its sustained growth in the late 1980s when Brendan's sons Tony and Paul took a more active role in the business.

"Tony is practical like his father," says Phil Rasdale.

"Paul, the older brother, is qualified as a Chartered Accountant. So there was this great combination of `hands on` and `financial awareness`."

The company progressed from household extensions and `local authority grant work` to refurbishments for councils and housing associations – and to new-build construction work in the social housing sector. By the early 1990s, Markey Builders was achieving a turnover of more than £2 million. With Tony and Paul at the helm, the company continues to grow.

The challenge

By 2000, Markey Builders was poised to achieve `lift off` as a major local provider of project-driven building projects. Now, the company needed to manage its growth more effectively.

“We were fortunate to have a core of people who had progressed to being managers and supervisors, who believed in the company and what it was doing, but who wanted to make things even better,” Phil Rasdale says.

“We realised at that stage what we wanted to be. We wanted to be more professional in our approach. It wasn’t necessarily the technical skills. It was the management skills, the interpersonal skills – the so-called `soft` skills. We wanted to raise our own standards and to consider the industry objective in terms of raising skills and qualifying the workforce generally. That was the catalyst for our further professional development.”

The strategy

The firm had already been aiming towards Investors in People. Now, linking with an Investors in People adviser, Markey Builders worked more closely with the Construction Industry Training Board to develop its own site management programmes. The company also began to advocate NVQ-vocational based qualifications, with managers working towards NVQ IV in Site Management.

“I did the NVQ V and started to develop the company’s training plans and identify training needs all areas including first aid, manual handling and working from heights to name but a few of the essential training areas. We also spent time developing our approach to customer care and have always looked to improve on our call-out management procedures,” Phil Rasdale says.

“It was a continual overhaul of our training system.”

The firm also put formal systems of communication into place, which were open, two-way and flexible.

“We now have a regular newsletter which comes out three times a year, as well as regular employee communications meetings and we also have partnering arrangement meeting with our valued sub-contractors. Project teams are linked to the headquarters by laptops and `PDAs`. Everyone now has a greater awareness of their role in the future success and growth of the business.”

Markey staff already benefit from a formal system of appraisal that enables them to identify their training needs.

Now, the firm aims to introduce its team to 360-degree appraisals.

“You issue a carefully crafted questionnaire to a circle of people who are impacted by your work,” Phil says.

“It can include customers, both internal and external, your supervisors, your peers and other people who report to you. So it’s not just the line manager who gives you an appraisal feedback. You get feedback from a 360-degree circle of people who are impacted by your working performance and by your style of working.”

Most critically, the company has a rolling five-year business plan, presented twice yearly, which includes a full range of performance objectives such as turnover, marketing and essential areas of customer service.

It is a strategy that is built on inspiring leadership, training and development, effective management of resources and building the business through an ever-expanding core of satisfied clients.

“Staff are trusted – and, as a result, feel confident and appreciated,” Phil says.

The results

The firm grew threefold from 2000 onwards. Turnover is on course to grow from the current £10 million to £15 million plus in the next 12 months.

Having already secured long-term partnership arrangements with two housing associations, Markey Builders has recently secured a third similar deal.

A focus on health and safety enables the company to fulfil and exceed its targets for keeping accidents to a minimum.

“Health and safety is at the forefront all the time,” Phil says.

“It has to be. You have the demands of insurance companies and our clients need evidence that they are partnering with like-minded contractors.”

Staff clearly enjoy working for Markey Builders. Staff turnover is successfully maintained at almost zero.

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