
INVESTING IN PEOPLE TO DELIVER QUALITY SALES & MARKETING

Background

Size:	35 staff
Sector:	service industry
Locations:	Tavistock in Devon (HQ) and Stamford, Lincolnshire
Status:	First recognised as an Investor in People, November 2004 and successfully reviewed in 2007

Overall impact

"We`ve always used Investors in People to drive our business forward. It is the core driver for everything we do – and we have so much evidence of how our commitment to our team is bearing fruit."

Hilary Broadley, Director, Broadley Speaking

The organisation

After a 15-year career in the publishing and events industries, Hilary Broadley re-located to Devon with her husband David Conn in 1997. In the same year, Hilary established Broadley Speaking, working from home in Tavistock to offer `business to business` sales and marketing services.

"Through networking, I met businesses in the locality who needed lead generation and telesales work, " Hilary Broadley says.

"I took things to the point where I was working fairly full on – and then I started recruiting other like-minded people to work with me."

Early projects included the selling of sponsorship for the Southampton International Boat Show. Another was telemarketing for an exhibition design company based in Newton Abbot. A third project was selling training courses for a provider in Cornwall.

Broadley Speaking quickly established its own Tavistock office. In 2000, the business became incorporated, with David Conn bringing his financial expertise to the company as a partner.

"We quickly picked up an eclectic mix of businesses, selling different types of products and services. But lead generation is where we made our name and where the majority of our work lies," Hilary Broadley says.

"Businesses may be fine at servicing existing clients. But they will not have an internal team that is able to pick up a phone and generate leads from cold. We`re at the coal face, mining for customers. It`s an analogy I use a lot – but we do it and we do it well.

"We will usually spend a day with the new client, de-constructing and re-constructing their sales propositions, so we can really get under the skin of the business and know what it has to offer customers. It`s a fast-track formula to enable our teams to hit the ground running."

In 2006, Broadley Speaking saw an opportunity to open an office in Stamford, when team member Isobel Robson needed to re-locate to the town with her husband.

"We thought there was a limit to our growth in Tavistock. So we thought we`d start Isobel off as I`d started working on a couple of accounts in the area."

"Within a year, she`d generated enough business to build a team of eight staff."

The challenge

By 2004, with 19 staff on board, the central issue for Broadley Speaking was putting the right systems into place for managing growth.

"We`d grown from being a very small company to a slightly bigger one," Hilary Broadley recalls.

"We had 19 people but we knew we were going to want to grow to more than 30. We also knew that the systems that had served us in the past were not going to help us move forward.

"In the early years I had managed most of our people myself. Now what I had to do was to `replace myself` with a middle line of managers and team leaders. So we needed to develop more sophisticated management structures to accommodate the growth.

"We also needed better systems for supporting our people in all areas of their working lives - from the right coaching to regular appraisals."

The strategy

Developing a team of `leaders` as part of a detailed Business Plan became a priority. Establishing the Stamford office was a significant stage in the managed growth of Broadley Speaking.

"We also had to ensure that our talented people would want to stay with us, which meant that we had to give them a career path. So the strategy was to create team leader roles and to make sure that team leaders were equipped to manage, train and coach others. I carried a lot of responsibilities as head of the business which I needed to devolve to people I could trust and who were trained to take those responsibilities.

"Over the past two years, people have successfully grown into these roles."

Broadley Speaking also works hard to equip its teams with the skills to ensure success at the `coal face`. The working life of the company is built around ongoing systems for training and mentoring in areas such as sales skills, assertiveness, team building and written communication

The company committed to Investors in People in 2004 under the fast-track Assessment First option. With so many good practices in place, Broadley Speaking won its recognition almost immediately. The commitment is ongoing.

The Investors in People programme has also included guidance on maintaining cash-flows, identifying funding sources for marketing and IT systems – and refining training systems still further.

This culture of coaching and team-building is endemic throughout the company.

Staff are invited onto regular `away days` to look at all aspects of the business.

“We also take them away every Christmas,” Hilary Broadley says.

“In 2006 it was Amsterdam and last year it was Paris. We build into this an awards evening to recognise peoples` contributions.

“You can`t achieve our kind of growth unless you develop and nurture your team. They are everything to us. Our expectations and standards are high and we equip our people to deliver.”

The results

From £11,000 of sales in its first year, Broadley Speaking has recently achieved a turnover of more than £1 million

The company also continues to grow at more than 40% annually, serving an expanding base of more than 400 clients, including insurance group AIG, the major property portal Primelocation.com and the UK printing and copying franchise Kall Kwik.