

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Organisation Improvement Framework

Review Assessment Report

Commercial in Confidence



Lancaster Training Services Ltd

Heysham, Morecambe,
Lancashire.

UNDERTAKEN BY
Allan Stevenson

On behalf of Investors in People North West

LAST DAY ON SITE;
16th August 2011



| Contents | Page |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Objectives | 3 |
| Outcome | 4 |
| Executive Summary | 5 |
| Findings against Objectives | 6 |
| Linkage to the Topic Map | 10 |
| Evidence Assessed Matrix | 11 |
| Continuous Improvement/Action Plan | 12 |
| Conclusion | 14 |

Introduction

This report details the outcome of the latest review of **Lancaster Training Services Ltd** against the Investors In People standard, the recognition now being continuous since April 2000.

The organisation provides an extensive range of instruction and qualification to the transport industry and has many major organisations within its customer portfolio.

Amongst other contracts, LTS Ltd provides training through the Skills Fund Agency. It is a member of the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association and was a founder member of the Logistics Academy North West.

The organisation has a management committee who are the directors of the company for legal purposes. These comprise representatives of the 13 member companies.

LTS Ltd was founded in 1968 and has had charitable status since 1979, when it also became a limited company. Since the last review, which was the first within newly-acquired premises, the business has consolidated its position as a proactive leader in transport-related training, with subsequent development of personnel to reflect its objectives in both the short and long term.

Discussion with senior management has determined that a review against the relevant 37 indicators of the of the Investors In People standard would be the most appropriate for the business at this time.

Of the nineteen people employed, twelve were interviewed during the on site visit. This represented 63% of the total and was within UKCES guidelines of between 40% and 80% for an organisation of this size.

Interviews were held one to one and in pairs and included appropriate representation from each sector of the workforce.

Objectives and Focus for the Review.

- 1 To establish whether the business continues to meet the core requirements of the Investors In People standard.
- 2 To identify areas of good practice and to make recommendations for future development of use of the standard.
- 3 To sample employee opinion on the extent to which people feel involved and engaged, as appropriate, in the actions and developments taking place within the business and to make recommendations for development in this area.

- 4 To determine the effectiveness of management in motivating people and enabling them to exercise their initiative in respect of the achievement of organisational goals.

Review Assessment – Outcome

Having carried out the review process in accordance with the guidelines provided for assessors by UK Commission for Employment and Skills, the Assessor was satisfied beyond any doubt that **Lancaster Training Services Ltd** continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. On behalf of Investors in People North West the Assessor would like to congratulate **Lancaster Training Services Ltd** on their achievement.

Review against the Investors In People standard.

Investors In People recognition is subject to review every three years, although organisations may opt for a more frequent review as their circumstances change.

The latest date for the next review is August 2014.

*The Investors in People Framework

There are *39 evidence requirements established within the basic Investors in People standard (The Standard). The organisation is required to meet each of these to achieve Investors In People recognition. (*37, if representative groups are not present within the organisation).

‘Beyond the Standard’, refers to the 157 additional evidence requirements within the Investors In People Framework and these are classified as ‘Your Choice’. It is optional for organisations to be assessed against these additional evidence requirements.

By gaining an additional 26 evidence requirements or more they can be recognised as;

- *Additional 26 (65 total); **Bronze***
- *Additional 76 (115 total); **Silver***
- *Additional 126 (165 total); **Gold***

Topics highlighted in blue on page 10 identify the areas where there is the potential to gain recognition at higher levels of the standard.

Continuous Improvement

The points identified within the action plan on pages 12 and 13 are designed to provide you with a framework for helping you to improve your performance.

Executive Summary

The review of Lancaster Training Services Ltd has identified that the organisation is demonstrating exemplar performance in respect of achievement against the 37 indicators and **has the clear potential to achieve at higher levels of the Investors framework.**

The management team have developed a clear set of objectives that together comprise the organisation's Strategic Priorities for 2011-12 and these are determined in association with staff at every level, who are enabled to contribute their ideas to the process. Plans are communicated throughout the business via meetings and are recognised and understood- as appropriate to their roles- by everyone interviewed. Priorities include: People Development, Quality and Service, Cost, expansion of training provision and the securing of new business.

The business is ambitious and continues to deliver high quality services to both public and private clients, always looking to the future and planning for people and product development as a means of sustaining and improving growth.

Reviews of organisation performance are frequent and regular at strategic and departmental levels. Individual performance review is regular and effective, closely linking what people do to not only what the organisation requires, but also to personal development, with several examples of people being developed in line with personal ambition.

Processes and procedures are in place that enable people to support achievement of objectives and people were very clear as to how their roles impacted on a range of performance indicators.

The Leadership and management structure has changed within the last year as a response to opportunities created by staff leaving, enabling more effective working and a streamlining of operations. The changes have involved those affected, with very positive responses being noted. One to one coaching and close personal support from the senior manager has been provided and this continues to be a hallmark of how Lancaster Training Services operates.

Developments in managing people are continuous and reflect a very personal approach to the management of his staff by the senior manager. This close support is recognised and valued by people, who regard their employment with a great degree of satisfaction. Other managers spoke of their recognition of his management behaviour as providing them with a role model and this in turn has created a distinct organisational style.

People report that they are very satisfied with the way in which they are managed.

Good practice recognised against aspects of the standard.

- **A very Open, Supportive and Encouraging management style at all levels.** Many people commented that their efforts were recognised and appreciated. They felt that management were very supportive and enabling. Comments noted included;

'I've been here for a while now and the support has not lessened. You get to know what is happening and it always feels like you are at the centre of what is going on'.

'I get thanks and praise on a regular basis. The managers are all very open about things too. You always know what is happening. It might be down to the fact that we are not a large organisation, but I don't think so. I have worked in small businesses and they were nothing like this'.

'If you ever have a problem they will always help you, without question'.

- **Strong focus on personal development;** linking to both the needs of the business and personal aspiration and improvement;

'I've done a Certificate In Education qualification, with time off to study and have had a lot of support from the manager. That's very good for me and for the business too. They're very strong on personal development'.

'Management has told me that I can go further with my qualifications if I want to. It's not the right time for me at the moment, but it's nice to know that I can when I want to'.

- **Clear focus on organisational values and how people's contribution 'makes a difference'.** Consistent delivery of Quality of Service and a proud reputation are key elements of the way that LTS performs. People are clear as to how what they do contributes to these success factors;

'We are all about making sure that the learners, whoever they are, are provided with a complete experience of learning that means they will come back to us'.

- **Evaluation of achievement against objectives at business, departmental and individual levels.** LTS is keen to determine how outcomes meet objectives at every level and see this as key to success, whether this is via customer satisfaction surveys, statistical information relating to performance of groups of learners or achievement at a personal level. Processes are in place to support further development.
- **Collaborative working style;** a very strong sense of team spirit is in evidence, with people speaking of how effectively others will help and support them.

- **Focus on empowering people.** A clear focus on allowing people to make their own decisions and to act accordingly is recognised. People said;

'I can put my ideas forward and more often than not, I get the ok to proceed. That's good because you feel that you are using your expertise to good effect'.

'I get left alone to do my job. I love it. If I need help, I can always get it. It's nice to be trusted to get on with it'.

Development Opportunities.

- **Induction. Consider establishing SMART performance objectives at the commencement of employment.** This will have the benefit of providing a focus for actions and the opportunity to develop confidence by enabling 'easy wins' at an early stage of working.
- **Health and Wellbeing.** Many people spoke of how they are supported and considered in a range of circumstances. Much of this is dealt with informally, with, as people noted, a good degree of generosity. For the future, consider formalising approaches within a policy and establishing strategic objectives that will further aid action in this area. Consider too, the merits of stipulating exactly what people can expect-this may mean drawing together existing policies and developing further good practice.
- **Performance Appraisal.** Consider the benefits of reviewing performance against objectives at the half year as opposed to the annual nature of the current process. Perhaps this could be more of a self assessment ?. This to reflect the speed of changing circumstances.

Review Objective 3

To sample employee opinion on the extent to which people feel involved and engaged, as appropriate, in the actions and developments taking place within the business and to make recommendations for development in this area.

There was widespread recognition that people were involved and engaged in the whole of the workings of LTS and the management team make considerable effort to ensure that people are enabled to contribute via their reviews of the business SWOT analysis. People are invited to contribute via a review of the previous year's process and to add-to any issues that they feel are relevant. There is clear evidence that people 'buy in' to this, with several issues being noted by individuals and taken up by the business in pursuit of objectives. An example being an identified need for a review of certain internal processes that is now underway.

In summary against this objective.

It is clear that people value the fact that their opinions are sought and that actions are taken as a result of their input.

Moving forward.

The process whereby people are asked to review the SWOT analysis and add their thoughts is well considered and has operated for several years. In some cases, issues remain as highlighted some time ago, and whilst it is recognised that this is often the case, the danger is that these issues are accepted as 'just the way things are' and the SWOT becomes simply a recording device and a wish list.

The SWOT process is first and foremost a tool to drive the business forward and as a means of moving forward and to support the challenging of all aspects of the SWOT-**gaining more leverage from the activity** (getting greater value)- consider the following approaches;

1. Move people's thinking away from '*contributing* to the SWOT' and more to ***addressing the issues highlighted within it***. This could be achieved in a themed way- approaching selected issues across the business (focus) is one. Another would be to establish challenges to groups of people from different departments and to set personal objectives for individuals as a part of their development. (stretch for some, confidence building for others).
2. Look to **focus on those aspects that will have the greatest benefit** to the business whichever quadrant of the SWOT they derive from.
3. **Start from scratch!** Put the time aside within your regular meetings to develop a new and updated business analysis- consider a different approach- perhaps using **PESTEL** as a vehicle for the analysis. (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal). This to invigorate the process and re-focus energies. (you might start with this approach at departmental levels, focusing on departmental working). This will further support your policy of empowering people to contribute.
4. Ensure that personal objective setting links to the achievement of issues within SWOT or PESTEL at some level, to focus on contribution beyond 'day to day' working. This will also enable people to see the business from a different perspective.
5. Publish frequent updates on achievement against the analysis, to inform, motivate and challenge (and re-direct actions as required).

Review Objective 4

To determine the effectiveness of management in motivating people and enabling them to exercise their initiative in respect of the achievement of organisational goals.

People within LTS are highly motivated with a strong sense of loyalty to the business.

As indicated previously, people recognised that they could use their initiative and this was true of those whose jobs had more scope for variation as well as for those people who had more prescribed duties. It was clear that the senior manager has recognised that this latter group could benefit from increased responsibility and stretch and additional responsibilities for customer responsiveness and liaison have been provided. Comments noted included;

'We have both been given scope to work the roles in the best way. We have discussed it with (the manager) and he has supported us all the way. I'm very happy with the way things have progressed'.

'They will listen and take action on what I say. It's very respectful and things work well'.

'I get involved in everything here and it's the best job I have ever had. They will support everything you do'.

In summary against this objective;

Management style and a strong focus on empowering people in pursuit of objectives, coupled with effective information sharing and clearly defined values and organisation objectives mean that people are very focused on achievement.

There is a strong 'can do' ethos within the organisation and this is recognised and appreciated by managers, whose styles are in keeping with those at the top of the organisation.

Moving forward.

- Whilst you operate an effective Talent Management strategy based upon an informal approach, consider how this might be formalised to address business objectives that you will derive from future analytical tools such as SWOT/PESTEL. What part will this play in Succession planning /Empowering /Motivating people?
- Consider how you reward initiative. You value it, could you do more to further motivate people in this area? Consider approaches other than financial. Does everyone understand what constitutes 'initiative'? Publicise examples.

Investors in People Topic Map for Lancaster Training Services Ltd

| Business Strategy | Learning & Development Strategy | People Management Strategy | Leadership & Management Strategy | Management Effectiveness | Recognition & Reward | Involvement & Empower | Learning & Development | Performance Measurement | Continuous Improvement |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| The Standard - Top Managers should make sure (and their people should confirm) that: | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Organisation has vision/purpose strategy and plan</p> <p>People involved in the planning</p> <p>Rep.groups (where app.) are consulted when developing plans</p> | <p>Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan</p> <p>Resources for learning and development are made available</p> <p>The impact will be evaluated</p> | <p>People are encouraged to contribute ideas</p> <p>There is equality of opportunity for development and support</p> | <p>Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people</p> <p>People know what effective managers should be doing</p> | <p>Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop their people</p> | <p>People believe they make a difference</p> <p>People believe their contribution is valued</p> | <p>Ownership and responsibility are encouraged</p> <p>People are involved in decision-making</p> | <p>People's learning and development needs are met</p> | <p>Investment in learning can be quantified</p> <p>Impact can be demonstrated</p> | <p>Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management</p> |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| Your Choice - Top Managers should make sure (and their people should confirm) that: | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Clear core values relate to vision and strategy</p> <p>Key performance indicators are used to improve performance</p> <p>Social responsibility is taken into account in the strategy</p> <p>People and stakeholders are involved in strategy development</p> | <p>The learning and development strategy builds capability</p> <p>Plans take account of learning styles</p> <p>People help make decisions about their own learning</p> <p>Learning and development is innovative and flexible</p> <p>There is a culture of continuous learning</p> | <p>The recruitment process is fair, efficient and effective</p> <p>A diverse, talented workforce is created</p> <p>A work-life balance strategy meets the needs of its people</p> <p>Constructive feedback is valued</p> <p>The structure makes the most of people's talents</p> | <p>Leadership and management capabilities for now and the future are defined</p> <p>Managers are helped to acquire these capabilities</p> <p>Leadership and management strategy link to business strategy, taking account of external good practice</p> <p>Everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities</p> | <p>Managers are role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing</p> <p>Coaching is part of the culture</p> <p>People are helped to develop their careers</p> <p>There is a culture of openness and trust</p> | <p>Reward and recognition strategies link to business strategy and are externally benchmarked</p> <p>Representative groups are consulted (where appropriate)</p> <p>What motivates people is understood</p> <p>Success is Celebrated</p> <p>Benefits strategy goes beyond legal requirements</p> <p>Colleagues' achievements are recognised</p> | <p>Effective consultation and involvement is part of culture</p> <p>People are supported and trusted to make decisions</p> <p>Knowledge and information are shared</p> <p>People committed to success</p> <p>There is culture of continuous improvement</p> <p>People can challenge the way things work</p> <p>There is a sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation</p> | <p>Learning and development resources are used effectively</p> <p>Learning is an everyday activity</p> <p>Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used</p> <p>People are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential</p> <p>All learning is valued/celebrated and is an everyday activity</p> <p>Mentoring is used</p> <p>Personal development is supported</p> | <p>The contribution of people strategies is measured and evaluated</p> <p>Impact on key performance indicators can be described</p> <p>Performance improves as a result</p> <p>Career prospects Improve</p> <p>Flexible and effective approaches to measuring return on investment are used</p> <p>ROI in people is reported to stakeholders</p> | <p>Self review and information from external review are used</p> <p>Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's views on how they are managed</p> <p>Internal and external benchmarking are used</p> <p>People's views on how they are managed improves</p> <p>People believe it's a great place to work</p> |

Traffic lighted (Red, Amber and Green) – See Key on Evidence Matrix

Blue – Potential to meet these areas of the framework at higher levels.

Evidence Requirements assessed were as follows:

Traffic lighted (Red, Amber and Green)

| The Standard – Evidence Requirements | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| ER | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | | | | | | | | | | |

Key:

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ | Evidence Requirement Met | | D | Met with Development Opportunity |
| X | Further Evidence Required | | | Evidence Requirement Not Assessed |

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR LANCASTER TRAINING SERVICES LTD.

| Objective/Priority/Issues | Suggested Development Activity | Client Action | Assessor Support | Support available |
|--|--|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| <p>Consider the benefits of achievement against the higher level framework of Investors In People as a means of enabling Continuous Improvement for the business.</p> | <p>Conduct your own research linked to this topic, via the free website; www.iipinteractive.net</p> <p>And, discuss the option of being reviewed against the higher levels of the standard in due course with assessor in the next year.</p> | Yes | Yes | Idg consultancy support |
| <p>Talent Management linked to strategic objectives.</p> | <p>Consider Talent Management approaches related to the development of Business objectives (linked to objective 4 within the report-page 9). The assessor is able to put you in touch with an IIP company who have expertise in this area if you wish to know about their approaches, in addition to support from idg.</p> | Yes | As required | Idg consultancy support |
| <p>Develop Health and Wellbeing strategy.</p> | <p>Review advice and guidance within the national standard at www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/healthandwellbeing Implement as a part of objectives for the next business plan.</p> | Yes | Yes | Idg consultancy support |
| <p>Improved business analysis involving the workforce. (objective 3, page 8).</p> | <p>Take action to implement recommendations as preparation for the development of the 2012/2013 business plan.</p> | Yes. | Yes. | Idg consultancy support |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Consultancy support. | <i>In order to support your continuous development arising from this report we have a number of flexible options including one to one support with your action plan, consultancy that would help in terms of further advice plus workshops, training or on line tools and tutorials. Please let me know if you want me to arrange any of these to support you on your journey when working towards world class practices.</i> | | Discuss with assessor in a September 2011. | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|--|

Conclusion

Management and staff of **Lancaster Training Services Ltd** are to be congratulated on their high level performance in achieving continued recognition against the standard and on the way in which management and staff combine to deliver an exceptional product to clients.

My very best wishes for your continued success.

The support of Martyn Horabin, Training manager, in facilitating arrangements for the review is recognised and appreciated.

My thanks also to all who participated in the review for their openness and co-operation. It has been my pleasure to work with you.

Name: Allan Stevenson

Investors in People Assessor:

Date: 23rd August 2011.

Contact Details: email allan@astec4.com
Mobile; 07976 659193