



TRAINING

Investors in People: How I Helped LCEU Go for Gold

Investors in People is an accreditation which has been developed and refined over nearly 30 years to help companies, leaders and employees work together to create better, more productive workplaces. It is the global benchmark when it comes to people management.

Background

In 2007, LCEU (the family construction / civil engineering company) achieved the Investors in People accreditation against their standard framework. Once accredited, the company was subject to a review to ensure implementation and compliance against the standard and to ensure they were able to be re-certified. In 2013, the company were informed that the framework had been updated and changed and could choose whether to maintain the IIP standard as it had done and achieve the standard criteria, which was now referred to as Bronze, or it could go a step further and strive for Silver, Gold or Champion Status.

What's Involved

The accreditation assesses how well your organisation is doing against the framework and then looks at where your business can improve and measures how well you're doing at leading and supporting your people, compared to other companies in your industry, or of your size.

I am an organiser so the first task in hand was a joy to me -getting under the skin of the business's current systems and processes to review where we sat on the benchmark scale, then analysing where the gaps were that needed addressing to enable us to move forward.

Establishing your current state of play, honestly and transparently is a huge part of the challenge - especially if you are reliant on others to provide key information.

These are the areas you need to look at:

1. Leading:

- a) Leading and Inspiring People
- b) Leading the Organisation's Values and Behaviours
- c) Empowering and Involving People

2. Supporting

- a) Managing Performance
- b) Recognising and Rewarding High Performance
- c) Structuring Work

3. Improving
- a) Building Capability
 - b) Delivering Continuous Improvement
 - c) Creating Sustainable Success

These are the levels each area is benchmarked against:

- Developed (Standard Requirement to maintain IIP Accreditation or gain it)
- Established (Silver)
- Advanced (Gold)
- High- Performing (Champion – Now platinum)

I devised an IIP Manual which detailed the standard requirements and I detailed what the company had in place for each area. This enabled us to see the gaps and what areas of work were required.

The next step is to then meet with an assessor and agree what level to apply for. He recommended that a company like ours should just stick with Bronze. I told him we would be going for gold.



Impressing the Assessors

In October 2013, we were granted with IIP Gold, which saw the assessor in tears with us as a family and apologising for not embracing and listening to one of the people that knew the company the best. As a small company, we had achieved so much.

During this time, we had also faced financial difficulties, as one of our clients had gone into administration owing more than ½ a million and we were unsure whether we would come out the other end, so to achieve this was awesome. We had survived the storm and shown the big boys that we could beat them in more ways than one.

“Achieving the gold accreditation represents achievement of world class best practice and shows you are a truly cutting-edge organisation operating at the highest levels of people management practice” Alan Morris Assessor.

“This has been an excellent review of an organisation that has strong beliefs about their approach to their workforce and customers. The desire to ensure that all people adhere to clearly defined standards with regard to knowledge, skills and behaviour is refreshing and offers a great example of what can be achieved”.

We were the first company in Wales and first company in the construction sector to achieve gold and we celebrated by holding a black-tie dinner which involved a speech from the Secretary State from Wales.

So, a fabulous feeling all round, however, it is a continuous journey. In 2015, the standard changed again as had the goal posts, as they now introduced an even more in depth assessment process. At this time the business had grown from 8 employees to 30. What was now required was an online assessment for employees to complete, interviews with the directors to determine the company's ambition and people priorities and a 2 day onsite assessment which included 121 meetings with the staff. A further ½ day

observation took place of a training session involving a mixture of employees from across the company (directors, management and employees), followed by a comprehensive review of a range of paperwork.

LCEU maintained its Gold Accreditation against the new standard - which was much harder to achieve and in 2019 the business maintained Gold again. These are all the areas I was involved in reviewing and preparing for the accreditation:

- Working with the team as a whole - the link between directors, management and staff
- Devising policies and procedures
- Training Sessions
- Staff Briefings
- Newsletters
- Training and Development for all staff and Training Evaluation
- Management Programmes
- ISO Management System Standards
- Work planning systems
- Supervisions and Mentoring
- Management Review Meetings
- Client Feedback strategies and evaluations
- Work Instructions
- Audits and Inspections and results
- Site Meetings
- Snagging Lists and RPW's
- Informal chats with staff
- Resource Planning Meetings
- System Improvement Reports
- Anonymous feedback
- HR Procedures and Opportunities
- HR Systems monitoring staff turnover and staff absence
- KPIs and Management Programmes and Targets, SWOT and PESTLE Analysis
- Business Planning



Why This is Great for Business

Organisations that lead, support and develop their workforce effectively are 17% more productive and 21% more profitable. Employers who get this wrong not only suffer the performance consequences but also see a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of their employees - but for me it was about so much more than this.

This accreditation proved that as a business we had evolved. I had progressed very traditional, in many ways dated, 'old school' processes to now be industry leading.

I now knew that all employees were protected, safe, nurtured and valued - with systems in place to ensure this was consistent. Appreciation and respect for staff had always been there but the processes to ensure they are more formally supported were now in place, and this set the business up strongly for future growth.

I had moved mountains in terms of changing mindsets and had instilled the importance of creating proper frameworks, in an industry that typically flies by the seat of its pants. This is what made me proud, and the accreditation made the whole team proud as it was a stamp of recognition of all they had committed to.

This was a quote from the Company Director, Frank Lawson, who founded the business in 2000.

“I believe in an honest day’s work for an honest’s day’s pay and I like to focus on getting the job done. I am not a fan of overcomplicated paperwork or jumping through hoops that feel unnecessary and I resisted putting formal procedures and processes in place for years. We have always prided ourselves in providing excellence in the products and services provided to our customers and community- but I guess we weren’t always great at demonstrating that we do this. I see now the importance of being able to show others how we go the extra mile and how our family business has become world class.”

THIS is what made it all worth it.