

Commercial in Confidence



**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

Review Report for

**LLITE**

**Assessment against the Investors in People National Standard**

**Carried out by Grant Hamilton  
On behalf of Yorkshire & Humberside Assessment Ltd.**

**May 2009**

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## **1. Review details**

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## **2. Recommendation**

Having carried out the assessment process rigorously and in accordance with the guidance for Assessors by Investors in People UK, I am satisfied that LLITE meets the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. I am pleased to confirm that LLITE continues to be recognised as an Investor in People.

Grant Hamilton  
Assessor

### **3. Background Information**

The Company was formed in 2001 and is a private training provider focussing on construction and related trades.

The Company has undergone a number of changes since the last assessment not least the move to new premises as well as a change in structure which has enabled it to move to a more business focused approach.

The Company employs 40 people on two sites in Hull and Sheffield where they have their own training centres aimed at providing realistic training and job experience to learners covering school leavers to adults.

The key strategy for the Company is to become a regional provider of services and therefore a new centre in Scunthorpe will open in June 2009 with further premises in South Yorkshire to follow.

All programmes offered lead towards nationally accredited qualifications and provide a solid foundation for a career in the construction industry.

All Tutors are industry experienced and have been developed through nationally accredited qualifications to deliver set programmes.

### **4. Objectives of the Review**

Do people feel that they have ownership for their part of the business?

Do people feel that they are supported in taking ownership of their role?

Do people feel that the new structure is working effectively?

How was the move to the new premises handled?

What do people feel the current role of the MD is and what should this be in the future?

### **5. Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank all those who took part in the Review for giving of their time, opinions and suggestions in order to help the Company progress.

## 6. Review outcomes summary table

	All ERs met? (Y/N)	Potential improvement areas? (Y/N)
<b>Developing strategies to improve the performance of the Company</b>		
1. A strategy for improving the performance of the Company is clearly defined and understood	Y	Y
2. Learning and development is planned to achieve the Company's objectives	Y	Y
3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the Company's people	Y	Y
4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.	Y	Y
<b>Taking action to improve the performance of the Company</b>		
5. Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people	Y	N
6. People's contribution to the Company is recognised and valued	Y	N
7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making	Y	Y
8. People learn and develop effectively	Y	N
<b>Evaluating the impact of performance</b>		
9. Investment in people improves the performance of the Company.	Y	N
10. Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed	Y	Y

## **7. Areas of good practice**

Excellent culture and ethos exhibited by all people in believing and living the vision of the Company

The Company has a clear strategy with objectives that can be clearly measured and that is understood by all people.

Development is clearly linked to objectives within the strategy.

Development opportunities are available for all people within the Company.

People understand what managers should be doing to lead, manage and develop them.

Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.

People's contribution to the Company is recognised and valued.

People are encouraged to take ownership and be involved in the decision making process.

Induction of new employees is effective.

Effective evaluation processes are in place.

## **8. Findings relating to the Investors in People Standard**

There is a clear strategy for the Company which is set out in the Business Plan. The plan defines the strategy for the next 3 years and has a number of Values, Aims and Goals. These are:

Opportunity – offering another chance to people who have traditionally struggled to access mainstream learning and employment  
Sustainability – helping people to find a career, not just a job and breaking the cycle of unemployment  
Participation – Delivering training that is individualized and meets the needs of a broad range of people  
Equality – working with people regardless of their background, ability or problems

Provide high quality, flexible vocational training opportunities  
Ensure that the training provided meets the needs of the construction sector and local regeneration activities  
Provide clients with the support necessary to access quality sustainable employment opportunities  
Ensure the sustainable growth of LLITE

The Plan also clearly sets out measurable targets which relate to:

100% of profiled recruitment targets are achieved  
90% of learners achieve accredited learning  
Retain 80% of learners across all contracts  
60% of short term unemployed clients into employment

There are also other targets relating to tracking, Skills for Life and Train to Gain engagement.

The Company has gone through considerable change since the last assessment with managers leaving and financial difficulties due to the review of some contracts. This has also led to the Company being restructured as a result.

The new structure is still bedding in but has been welcomed by staff who now more clearly understands the future for the Company and how this will be achieved. People commented positively on the Directors in particular, their management style and the openness with which they shared information.

The Directors in the past have had a very “hands on” approach to the work but through the change in structure this has enabled them to take more of a back seat. One of the issues I was asked to investigate related to the role of the Directors and what people felt that should be moving forward. People did feel that Directors had a key role to play in:

Defining the strategy

Being out in the market place attending networking events to raise the profile of the Company

Working on new bids and contracts

Being used as a sales tool by the Centres to help them develop business through their networks and contacts.

The issue for Directors is that currently they do still need to work in the business as the management team is still forming and many are inexperienced in their roles. I would encourage the Company to define Directors roles and develop an action plan with a timeline that will enable them to step back with confidence knowing that the management team has the skills and abilities required to take the business forward. The role of the management team will be covered later in this report in terms of their capabilities.

It was clear that people did know what the Company was trying to achieve and how they helped support this. The Company operates Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and all staff were clearly targeted on achieving agreed objectives most which could be measured. These are reviewed on a monthly basis with results reported back at management meetings to review progress. More importantly –and this is excellent practice – action plans are developed where performance is not being achieved to improve practice and results. What now needs to be done is that action plans in some cases have no sanction when expected improvements are not achieved and the Company needs to consider how it will manage this and drive improvement into the workforce.

It was clear from the discussions that all staff are clearly focussed on their KPI's and these also drive development activities in terms of supporting individuals to achieve their targets.

Development activities are clearly linked to business needs and the Company is heavily committed to the development of people with a history of growing their own. In fact the majority of people I spoke to had changed roles within the Company and progression is clearly a priority. This has in the past been mainly driven by the need for qualifications in order for the Company to deliver the contracts it holds with various agencies such as Jobcentre Plus to name but one.

This is still very much the case and it was clear from the discussions that people are still very qualification focussed rather than the improved knowledge, skills or behaviours that will be developed as a result. There is also still some perception that “if I have qualifications it will help me get other jobs” and therefore they are used as a safety blanket. The Company needs to ensure that all people understand what knowledge, skills and behaviours will be developed as a result of development activities.

The Company has also clearly identified development for staff and with the recent restructure issues this has been mainly delivered internally with managers at all levels playing a major role in supporting people to improve their skills.

Managers at all levels were able to discuss development activities related to their teams and whilst these activities are planned informally and on an ongoing basis it was clear that staff understood the requirements and the development that was required.

People did feel involved in agreeing and identifying their development needs and this is mainly achieved informally through reviews or the appraisal process which the Company operates. The development of KPIs has meant that people's performance is reviewed more often than before which makes this an effective process.

People also spoke positively about the Company, the opportunities for them to develop their skills and knowledge and the support given to them by managers to undertake the development activities which had been agreed.

Equality of opportunity is there for all with examples to support this. These included qualifications such as NVQ's, certificates in education, additional responsibilities and ongoing development of existing staff through coaching and mentoring.

That said it was my perception from some of the discussions that some people are approached to take on additional roles and responsibilities rather than these being advertised to all. Discussions with senior management have convinced me that this is not the case however they need to ensure that all people understand the process of internal recruitment so that this perception can be dismissed. This may also provide people with enhanced recognition and value by the fact that they achieved the position through a fair process and earned it on merit.

It was clear from the discussions that people did feel that managers within the Company did have the knowledge, skills and behaviours to identify and support their development. Again the culture of the Company came through with people speaking about the support from managers and "the open door policy which continues to be in place despite the change in the structure of the Company"

The Company has considered the skills managers need to lead manage and develop people and has invested heavily in management qualifications for people in that role. Managers clearly understand how they should act and this mainly related to the supportive culture of the Company and the use of processes such as reviews, team meetings and informal 1-1's to cascade information and provide encouragement for people to improve their skills and knowledge in order that the Company "achieves its targets."

This has been done informally and managers at all levels talk about "getting people to the right level." The one issue that became clear to me was the fact that nobody really understands the "level" what they need to do to achieve it, or when they will know they have achieved it. The management team within the Company is very new and in some cases inexperienced in a management role. There are also some key skills and knowledge that managers lack such as strategic planning skills and some people management skills

in enabling them to become more independent decision makers. I would recommend that the Company clearly defines the capabilities of managers at three levels. These are:

Directors  
Centre Managers  
Team Leaders

This will enable these individuals to understand the “level” required to aspire to the next role in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours required. It will also enable all people to understand the requirements of each role and enable the Company to build capability within the whole staff team.

Lastly on this subject there is an issue around succession planning where some roles are owned by one individual and the knowledge and skills are held there. Again by identifying the capabilities at each management role some of these tasks may be able to be covered by say Centre Managers once their role and responsibility for managing the centre has been clarified.

People also understood what they could expect from managers to lead, manage and develop them and echoed the comments of managers around the supportive ethos of the Company, approachability of managers and ongoing discussions around development of skills and knowledge.

It was clear from the conversations that managers believed they were effective in leading, managing and developing people and as previously discussed in this report there is an informal strategy to support this.

People agreed that this was the case and could cite examples of when managers had acted in the expected manner and again the culture of the Company was clearly evident at this point. That said there were a small number of people who were “struggling” with the new approach. They felt that in some cases it was a “case of their way with little discussion in how other methods might be used to get the same result.” The Company may wish to consider how managers will better engage with staff to get their support and commitment.

It was clear from the conversations that there is commitment to developing and recognising people. The Company has a history of developing people from within with individuals being able to progress their careers through being given the opportunity to take on extra roles and responsibilities and gain qualifications which recognised their skills and abilities. This is still the case today but there has been considerable change in the staff structure since the last Review but the view of people is that “there is a lot of opportunity here to improve your skills. The KPI’s have helped in clarifying what you need to achieve and managers are very supportive in helping you to get the training you need.”

This also impacted on the recognition given to people for what they do with one individual saying “the ask you to take on extra duties” and “we are always praised or

thanked by them” emphasised the culture and ethos of the Company. All managers were praised for their approach to people management with some being commented on as “brilliant” and “bringing stability to the centre which we’ve not had in a long time.”

It was also clear that people are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility with a strong sense of ownership and the ability to make decisions and in some cases formulate their own process with the support of managers. That said this was not uniformly the case with managers acting as problem solvers for some people rather than supporting them to make the decision. This links strongly to the comments above relating to managers and their people management skills and can be addressed through the suggestions made in that part of the report. This might particularly relate to Centre Managers and their role in terms of developing their centre and the potential business it might undertake. This may be different from centre to centre depending on the demographic of the area, different contracts offered and relationships with key stakeholders.

Again the culture was evident with people being allowed “to get on with the job” once objectives had been agreed but with the knowledge that “support is always available if you need it.”

The comments earlier in this report regarding managers are also relevant at this point. The Company needs managers to take more accountability and responsibility and I would encourage them to review those roles and clarify the new responsibilities and requirements to all staff.

Induction within the Company is excellent and has been severely tested recently due to the change in Company structure. Those people new to the Company spoke positively about induction and people had programmes tailored to their needs to support their integration. The same applies to those people changing job roles as a result of the restructuring with support from Directors and colleagues in helping them to undertake their new role.

As previously discussed in this report the Company strongly supports the development of people and actively encourage people to undertake accredited qualifications such as management qualifications and NVQs.

Managers were also able to explain how peoples development needs were met. This mainly related to undertaking qualifications they need to undertake their role, NVQs, management qualifications and ongoing coaching and mentoring.

The Company has an effective process for reviewing progress against KPIs and this is done mainly through the regular meetings held within the Company, audits and other inspections such as OFSTED, Jobcentre Plus and A4E.

The Self Assessment Report (SAR) sets out the evaluation of the Company performance against set targets and contracts delivered and this includes feed back from learners on what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Evaluation of

leadership and management within the Company is also assessed against set criteria and staff are given the opportunity to input to the process through the different meetings held within the Company. The key challenges for the Company set out in the SAR relate to:

- Standardise delivery, administration and management across the Company
- Manage the changing requirements and achievement of job outcome targets in a recession
- Expand work placement opportunities
- Complete the implementation of MAYTAS to report on performance across contracts
- Record employability, Skills for Life and Soft Skills delivered and the record the distance travelled by learners
- Implement and analyse feedback reports on all contracts
- Identify and measure the need for expansion linked to Flexible New Deal in an uncertain political and financial climate.

Development activities are also evaluated effectively with people clearly understanding why development is being undertaken and the benefits that will be seen as a result. There was evidence to support this which mainly related to the coaching and mentoring of people new to the Company and undertaking new roles.

The Company does have an excellent culture with the majority of people commenting positively on managers and the strategy for managing and developing staff. The re-structure of the management team has led to a different approach within the Company which has been welcomed by all staff.

Managers are continually reviewing their practice through regular meetings and reviews with support from senior managers in supporting them to learn new skills and approaches.

As discussed earlier in this report I feel that the capabilities of managers have been informally defined and the Company needs to review these at all levels of management to provide more clarity to the role and the responsibilities it carries. This will also help the Company to manage the succession planning issues and enable Directors to step back more from the day to day running of the Company and concentrate on the strategic growth for the future.

## **9. Recommendations for improving effectiveness**

### **Strategy**

The issue for Directors is that currently they do still need to work in the business as the management team is still forming and many are inexperienced in their roles. I would encourage the Company to define Directors roles and develop an action plan with a timeline that will enable them to step back with confidence knowing that the management team has the skills and abilities required to take the business forward.

Action plans in some cases have no sanction when expected improvements are not achieved and the Company needs to consider how it will manage this and drive improvement into the workforce.

### **Development**

It was clear from the discussions that people are still very qualification focussed rather than the improved knowledge, skills or behaviours that will be developed as a result. There is also still some perception that “if I have qualifications it will help me get other jobs” and therefore they are used as a safety blanket. The Company needs to ensure that all people understand what knowledge, skills and behaviours will be developed as a result of development activities.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

Some people are approached to take on additional roles and responsibilities rather than these being advertised to all. Discussions with senior management have convinced me that this is not the case however they need to ensure that all people understand the process of internal recruitment so that this perception can be dismissed. This may also provide people with enhanced recognition and value by the fact that they achieved the position through a fair process and earned it on merit.

### **Management Capabilities**

Enable all people (but particularly those in a management role) to understand the “level” required to aspire to the next role in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours required. It will also enable all people to understand the requirements of each role and enable the Company to build capability within the whole staff team.

There is an issue around succession planning where some roles are owned by one individual and the knowledge and skills are held there. Again by identifying the capabilities at each management role some of these tasks may be able to be covered by say Centre Managers once their role and responsibility for managing the centre has been clarified.

There were a small number of people who were “struggling” with the new management approach. They felt that in some cases it was a “case of their way with little discussion in how other methods might be used to get the same result.” The Company may wish to consider how managers will better engage with staff to get their support and commitment.

### **Ownership and Responsibility**

Managers act as problem solvers for some people rather than supporting them to make the decision. This links strongly to the comments above relating to managers and their people management skills and can be addressed through the suggestions made in that part of the report. This might particularly relate to Centre Managers and their role in terms of developing their centre and the potential business it might undertake. This may be different from centre to centre depending on the demographic of the area, different contracts offered and relationships with key stakeholders.