

case study



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

MJC Decorating and Refurbishment



Background

Size: 20 employees

Sector: Construction services

Location: Sutton, Surrey

Status: Achieved Investors in People Standard in 2005.

The organisation

Sutton based MJC Ltd specialises in external and internal building refurbishment and property maintenance for a range of recognised companies in the private and public sector such as Slough Estates, Universal Music and several London councils. The business is owned by Polish-born Witt Gamski and commenced trading as a partnership in 1986. In 1990 Witt bought out his partner and set up the current limited company. MJC is now a family business with Witt's wife Agi and his brother Julius helping to manage the 20-strong business.

With increasing competition in its sector, MJC's clients increasingly demand high quality work that surpasses regulatory standards and the company prides itself on delivering this. It can achieve such results thanks to its highly-skilled and trained workforce. As a result, MJC has been included on approved company rosters from which bigger clients pick their contractors. This has helped to treble the profits of the company.

- 15% increase in positive comments about the quality of work
- Created and sustain a positive working environment
- Building a confident and qualified workforce.

“Investors in People have encouraged us to improve communications throughout our business. The introduction of simple employee surveys and regular meetings has played an important role in creating a more positive working environment.”

Agi Gamski, Finance Director and Building Surveyor



The challenge

With established links to schemes run by the CITB, many training initiatives were already in place at MJC, however the company had not created any structures to monitor progress. "We were doing plenty of things to improve our training and people development, but we had not measured the results," explains Agi Gamski. "We did have processes, but these were not written down and this made it difficult to benchmark our people's performance consistently."

The company did have a business plan in place however it was dated and no longer fitted the needs of the business in terms of its objectives for people development. "Our business plan did not have any clear aims or objectives," says Agi. "We lacked a vision of where we wanted to be and therefore needed to update our plans to include this."

Lack of consistent communication also led to gaps in knowledge regarding productivity. "Without reliable feedback and performance mechanisms, we were really very much in the dark when it came to a true picture of the cost, quality and time of our projects," says Agi. "We needed a better approach and Investors in People helped to guide us towards this."

The strategy

Having chosen Investors in People, MJC's first action was to update its business plan. "We looked at both the short term and long term when re-building our plan," says Agi. "We wanted to include very clear aims and objectives so that we could revisit the plan and measure whether we had achieved our goals or not. Additionally we wanted to ensure that training and development was at the heart of our plan and we also included provision with this in mind."

Annual employee surveys were put in place as a means of getting feedback from people on a range of issues affecting them including their training requirements. Additionally, client surveys were conducted after every project to capture feedback on customer satisfaction and the quality of work carried out by MJC. The company also had regular assessments as part of its ongoing commitment to the CITB and ISO 9000. The time and cost of each project were also analysed. "This allowed us to appraise projects effectively and consistently. The approach was better than anything we had previously tried to do, because it quickly drew attention to issues whether good or otherwise," explains Agi.

The results

More broadly, communications have been improved by launching a newsletter and fortnightly management review meetings. "Employee meetings also take place on site, so that everyone can understand what is required on a given project," adds Agi.

Training has also been made available to everyone in the organisation. "As with other processes, we did have training schemes in place, but we had not formalised things," explains Agi. "As part of our training and development approach we ensured that people were sent on externally organised health and safety training. All our employees now have Construction Skills Certification Scheme CSCS cards. This means that they have taken and passed a recognised health and safety test."

Investors in People has helped MJC create a more confident and qualified workforce. "This has had an incredibly beneficial impact on our business. People feel greater satisfaction in their work and productivity has increased as a result. Naturally this has led to more satisfied customers and repeat business, which is so vital in our increasingly competitive sector," comments Agi.

MJC has enjoyed other benefits through its work with Investors in People. "It's made us aware that some employees did not know how they should express themselves. By improving our communications through simple employee questionnaires and by having regular management and employee meetings we have addressed this and created a more positive working environment," adds Agi. "We've also learned which skills some of our employees wanted to update or obtain. This has helped us to develop a more qualified team. Thanks to Investors in People we've gained one apprentice and updated all of our skills, which has boosted our morale immensely."

"Our people know what is expected of them and we also know when they have done an outstanding job," says Agi. "On average we have experienced a 15 per cent increase in positive comments and compliments about the quality of our work since we began surveying our customers."

As for the future, the company is continuing to look at ways in which it can respond to new issues affecting its sector. "Green issues are growing in importance and we're looking at ways in which we can build our skills in this area," comments Agi. "We'll be updating our health and safety skills whilst also improving our expertise around energy saving technologies such as solar panels. Training and development will remain key to our ongoing success and we shall also continue to listen to our customers so that we deliver what they want, when they want it and to the standard they require."

