

case study



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Ashley Associates UK Ltd

Topic: Health and Wellbeing at Work



- Turnover has nearly doubled in the past two years
- Productivity per employee is up by over 20%
- Thousands saved in recruitment costs as new people come in through recommendation routes

Background

Size:	9 people
Sector:	Recruitment to recruitment specialists
Location:	Gloucestershire
Status:	First recognised with Investors in People in 2005; Achieved Work Life Balance Model in November 2006; Last assessed November 2006

The organisation

Ashley Associates are specialist providers of recruitment services for other recruitment agencies. They operate throughout the UK and Europe recruiting for some of the top 100 companies.

The two Directors, Kay Coles and Marc Dodd set up the business in 2003. The company now employs nine people in their offices in Maisemore, a rural location on the outskirts of Gloucester.

Ashley Associates aim to offer "tailor made" and professional service. They try to build and maintain effective relationships with clients. Their service ethic can be summarised as resourceful, innovative, honest and professional.

"As a happy, healthy team with a good working environment we generally hit targets more often, therefore not only generating more revenue for the company, but also individual bonus for consultants. By generating more revenue for the company also means more incentives for the team."

Maz White, Office Manager



The challenge

Kay and Marc recognised the importance of recruiting and retaining professional, motivated people. They were aware that the recruitment sector has a variable “track record” in terms of supporting its people and this was something that the Directors wanted to address.

There was also a clear vision for the future of Ashley Associates. Kay explained, “As with all young enterprises we of course want to be successful, not only from a Director perspective but also for members of the team. The question, ‘where do we want to be’, will change and evolve as the business grows and we venture into unknown territories, new clients, new advertising channels and new members of staff.

“Ultimately, we want to be seen and heard as a professional recruitment to recruitment agency with scrupulous ethics and a squeaky clean reputation for providing the right candidate for the right job and vice versa.

“We want to be successful and able to expand and increase our market share and in turn the future of all members of the Company.”

The strategy

Since setting up the Company in 2003, Ashley Associates have put addressing individual needs of their people at the heart of the way that the business operates. The strategy to deliver effective support includes using both the IIP Standard and the IIP Work Life Balance Model. Their WLB Policy is clear about how supporting people’s individual choices contributes to a stable and well motivated team; “Our policy aim is encapsulated in the phrase, work life balance, everyone’s right”.

The strategy for successful expansion of the business is for an experienced, skilled and motivated work force to work harder and smarter. Part of the approach to working smarter is about the effective use of “up to date” information technology and systems. It’s also about helping the people to be in “good shape”.

In line with the principles of Investors in People, Ashley Associates identify training and development opportunities for employees that are linked to their business aims and objectives. They hold regular development sessions for the team.

All staff have regular performance review discussions. These discussions cover the “hard” business targets/skills but also include checks on individual needs and consideration of any health & wellbeing issues. New people are consulted on their work life balance choices as part of the induction process.

There are various wellbeing needs of the current team at Ashley Associates, these include: part time working, home working, leaving early for child care purposes and temporary changes in working hours. Comments from members of the team show how flexibility pays dividends in terms of personal wellbeing and motivation. One employee stated, “They’re good at recognising what makes people tick. We all believe in fair treatment.”

People are consulted on all aspects of their working environment. This is considered to be very important given the open plan nature of the office and the need for effective working arrangements.

The open and friendly style within the office fosters care for health and wellbeing. People are encouraged to share their out of work experiences such as holidays. Team members share common interests in such things as gym activities. Good performance in the business is celebrated in appropriate ways such as by a recent team visit to a health spa.

Staff are able to benefit from a general support package that includes accident and illness protection.

People are encouraged to make effective use of their holiday by taking two weeks leave in one go. It is recognised that staff need to recharge their batteries.

The results

Consultants are hitting targets more consistently and morale amongst the team is good.

The client base has expanded as has the number of candidates being placed. Service improvements have been delivered. The business operates in a very competitive market sector and these improvements speak volumes for the motivation of the people at Ashley Associates.

Absenteeism and staff turnover has always been minimal, and continues to be so. Kay believes this is a direct result of flexibility and the effective approach in supporting work life balance.

Ashley Associates is an employer of choice within the recruitment sector. They do not have to advertise for staff, recent recruits have come via recommendations from other team members. This saves thousands of pounds in direct recruitment costs.

Ashley Associates is a business that has a feel good factor in terms of both supporting the health & wellbeing of employees and improving business performance. There can be no doubting that all of the people recognise the dependent link between these two considerations.



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