

case study



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The Abbey hotel



- **As all areas have embraced the project and staff can see the benefits of the review**
- **Having been involved from the outset it gives employees a greater opportunity and a greater confidence to express their thoughts**
- **People can feel part of the 'whole' product offering not just their own department.**

Background

Size:	60 employees
Sector:	Hospitality
Location:	West midlands
Status:	Most recently recognised in 2008

The organisation

The Abbey's setting is one of the most perfect in the country, close to many interesting cities yet situated right in the heart of the countryside, at the foot of the Malvern Hills. With sensational views of the scenic Vale of Evesham and beautiful Malvern Hills, the hotel offers you a tranquil haven in which to retreat and relax.

The Abbey Hotel has a long history of welcoming guests and takes pride in providing attentive service and warm hospitality to everyone

"New choices is the best document Investors in People has ever produced and delivers an opportunity for businesses to maximise their potential. The process is uncomplicated and seems to have given the staff an enhanced sense of knowledge which I am sure will help us through this current economic climate."

Patrick Jones, General Manager



The challenge

The Hotel made the commitment to go for Investors in People and to use New Choices to provide a framework for the improving people processes. They had their review in June 2008 and realised quickly one of their main difficulties was the vast amount of temporary staff they employed. Not only that but English was their second language and this was causing a barrier in the day to day running of the business and had to be addressed. This transient workforce coupled with a lack of staff with hospitality linked qualifications made training and support a high priority.

As a business there were many different departments within the hotel's infrastructure so it was important to engage all levels of staff and encourage them to be receptive to the process and willing to contribute their time and energies. Also, it was necessary to create a single collective environment rather than the departments believing that they just looked after their own specific areas. With standards being raised by heavy investment into the business and competition in the current economic climate 'New Choices' was the tool to help them succeed.

The strategy

The Hotel conducted their own swot analysis fully realising they would not be up to the Standard however this was not interpreted as negative. Patrick Jones, general manager wanted to know the extent of the problems within the Hotel and this was an honest and open approach in identify those areas. They wanted to use the standard as a mechanism to enhance the performance of the organisation. It also served as an indicator of any good practice within the hotel.

They discovered due to an absence of key members of the staff, and temporary staff filling in, that values had begun to slip although no one was to blame directly. The positions were within the HR department and therefore directly impacted across the whole business.

When the initial meeting took place to go over their submission and it was likely they would fail they were offered the opportunity to default with a voluntary retaining recognition which would have been less costly. But the Patrick was determined to go through with the complete review prepared to rebalance and address their internal strategy.

They really believed the New Choices framework created an innovative way to approach their difficulties and overcome them. It was commented post the review that it was the best document Investors in People have ever produced and that it will significantly help them.

Lisa chambers, Training manager comments, " Investors in people has helped us in recognising good practice across our business in tandem with what we need to improve on. The action plan created will help us develop and align our business strategy and make clear our key objectives to all levels of staff. We believe wholeheartedly that the team effort we have put in will ensure we gain full accreditation later this year."

The results

Although they didn't attain Investors in People this time they are retaining recognition, and with their focussed action plan they are determined to gain accreditation at the next review in June 2009. The key initiatives identified were communication, development of staff and management skills these were recognised by the assessor and hotel comparably.

The good practices of some Heads of Department will be shared across the business, demonstrating what an excellent development tool Investors in People is. This will mean managers and supervisors growing their leadership skills, conducting appraisal meetings, and making meetings more interactive for all staff which in turn will help overcome the problem of temporary transient staff.

As all areas have embraced the project and staff can see the benefits of the review. More importantly, having been involved from the outset it gives them a greater opportunity and a greater confidence to express their thoughts. The action plan formulated is helping staff by setting dates for personal targets which giving them a clear goal to aim for. It has also enabled personnel to interact with other areas within the hotel and share their ideas. Regular meetings have encouraged this and people can feel part of the 'whole' product offering not just their own department.

The Abbey don't in any way see gaining Investors in People as just about having a badge but as tool to develop their business. They faced head on all their issues and with the help of 'New Choices' an environment in which to continue their success will be created.

