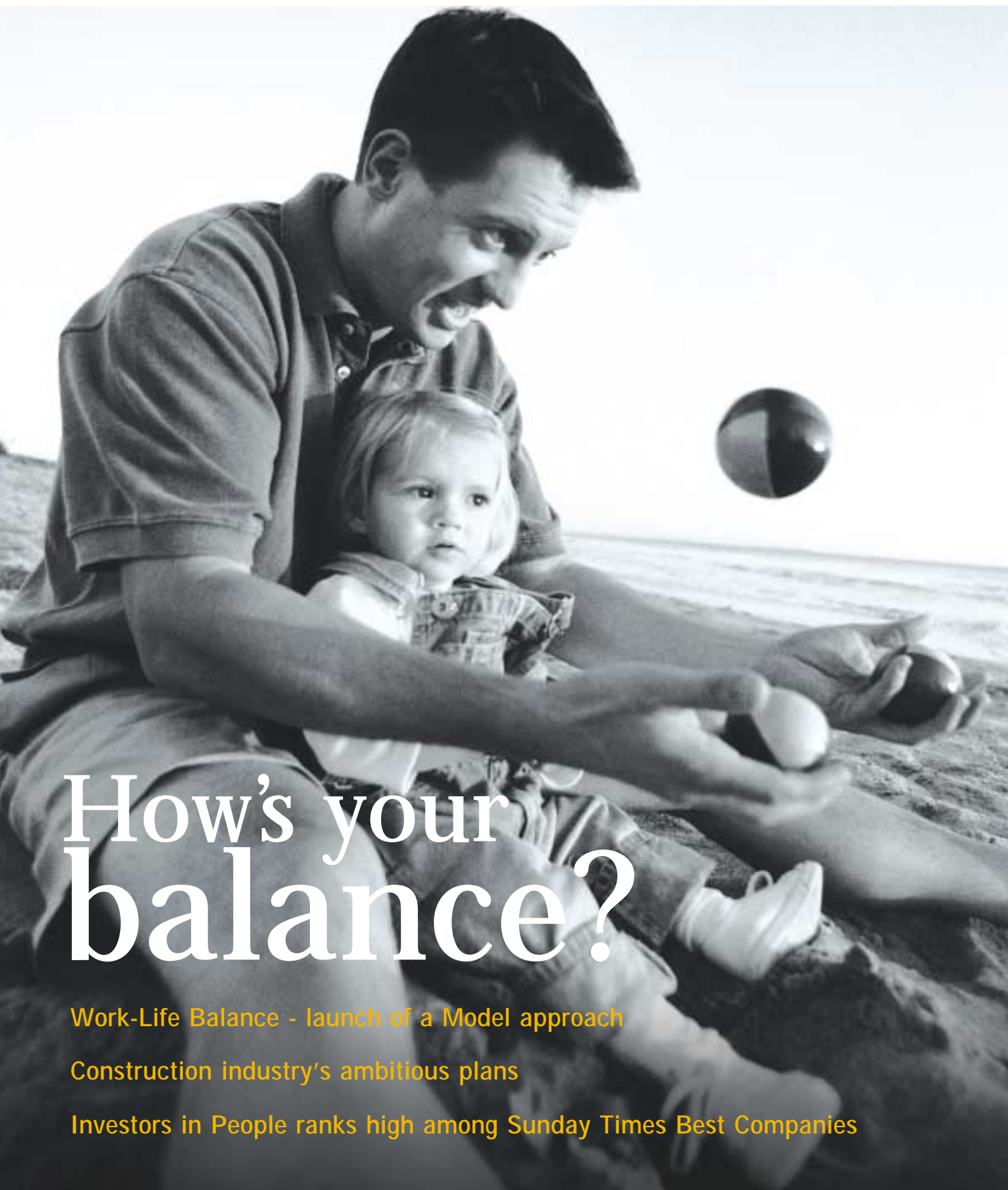


# Raising the Standard

Issue 4



## How's your balance?

Work-Life Balance - launch of a Model approach

Construction industry's ambitious plans

Investors in People ranks high among Sunday Times Best Companies



## Flexibility and new ways of working - these are the themes of this issue of Raising the Standard.

They reflect not just our own current priorities - especially the launch of the new Work-life Balance Model on June 5 - but also social attitudes and the concerns of leading businesses and government.

For example, during the first week in April a key part of the Employment Act 2000 came into force to give parents of young children the right to request flexible working arrangements. As usual with legislation the implications are more complex than headline reports might suggest. But the change undoubtedly represents a concern across society which demands more family-friendly policies and which asks for a new kind of relationship to be negotiated between individuals' responsibilities at work and their wider roles.

But that is just one strand in the story. The indications are that large numbers of people - whether with family responsibilities or not - want a greater degree of choice and autonomy in their lives so as to become more fulfilled and grow as individuals.

The various interest groups, from trades unions to employers organisations, will each have their own interpretation of these developments. But at Investors in People UK our perspective is clear and simple. We are focused on how these changes can help organisations to improve their performance and reach their business objectives. Our view - as in many other areas - is that what is good for the employee is also probably good for the employer.

### New Model

In that context we were delighted to be able to work with the organisation Employers for Work Life Balance, the DTI and the TUC to develop a model which would help organisations to adopt a broadly-based approach to this vital issue. Following extensive consultation and trialling, the Model has now been finalised and we outline its content and purpose on pages 7 -11. The signs are from the pilot programme that it is already making a terrific contribution to helping organisations become much more systematic in what they do in this area. Many organisations

already have a number of flexible elements in place. The new Work-life Balance Model will enable them to adopt a fully-rounded approach.

Further evidence, meanwhile, of the virtuous circle of 'Balance' comes in the results of this year's Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For (the majority of whom, I am delighted to report, are recognised Investors in People). As Patricia Hewitt, Trade & Industry Secretary, commented on the list, "Many (of these companies) know the value of work-life balance and family friendly measures. Businesses pursuing these policies find it easier to deliver services; to recruit, retain and motivate staff; and to reduce stress sick leave and absenteeism. Such flexibility produces a Win-Win situation."

### Celebrating Winners

Creating a Win-Win situation is, in a nutshell, what Investors in People is all about. And in terms of winners we are delighted to announce (on pages 2-3) the winners of our 'Tipped for Success' competition. This is likely to become a regular celebration of the wealth of ideas and insights to be found in so many Investors in People organisations. We have provided a distillation of some of the winning ideas which I hope you will find interesting and stimulating. With excellent prizes, in the shape of the chance to take part in management training at one of the UK's most prestigious management training centres, the competition is a real education from beginning to end.

As a final thought may I suggest that getting more balance into our lives does not mean blunting ambition or losing focus. It is just a more sensible and fruitful way of working and living. And I think that we can all sign up to that.

**Ruth Spellman**  
Chief Executive  
Investors in People UK



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# top tips from winning people

This year's Investors in People UK's 'Tipped for Success' competition produced a rich harvest of excellent business and management ideas.

There's a wealth of wisdom and experience amongst Investors in People organisations. Tapping into those ideas and spreading them around is the aim of the 'Tipped for Success' competition.

Following hundreds of suggestions for this year's competition the winning entries have now been selected and are being published, along with 'celebrity' contributions, in booklet form.

"It has been very difficult whittling down so many good ideas to the final group for publication," said Ruth Spellman, the CEO of Investors in People UK. "Along with my fellow judges, Gerard Burke, the Director of Lifetime Learning Programmes, Cranfield School of Management and Sue Martin from Investors in People UK, I was very impressed by the inventiveness and skill of the entrants. We really do have an excellent range of tried and tested tips."

The winners will now have the opportunity to participate in a Masterclass provided by the world-class university business school Cranfield School of Management. So to whet your appetite we reproduce below a selection of these winning ideas.

## LEADERSHIP

1. Don't ask anyone to do anything you wouldn't do yourself
2. Lead by example
3. Never pull rank
4. Have the courage to hire people who you think are better than you

Contributed by: Ms Claire Walker  
Organisation: Firefly  
Location: London

## EMPHASISE APPRECIATION

To accept this statement and apply it in the workplace is one of the biggest steps towards guaranteeing that everyone within the organisation feels that who they are, what they do and what they say matters. Aim to treat everyone you work with and work for not just equally but uniquely. Everyone needs to know that they matter and that what they bring to the organisation contributes to the overall success of the business."

Contributed by: Ms Gemma Todd  
Organisation: CareersEssex  
Location: Rivenhall, Essex

## TRANSPARENT 'E-SUGGESTION' BOX

"(My Organisation), Melcrum, recently launched a 'Best Ideas Competition' which is run as an e-mail competition to encourage employees to suggest ideas. How does it work? Any employee can submit an idea via e-mail, which are stored centrally on a web archive. A copy of the message is forwarded to the whole company on a per idea basis, daily or weekly digest resulting in a lively debate about how they could be implemented. At the end of each 3 month period, the two directors of the business review all the ideas that have been submitted and award prizes to the best contributions.

The competition serves to encourage employees to think about the way they do their jobs and to create an entrepreneurial culture that fosters innovation and learning. As a result of the competition, we now have a stable of winning ideas that will be groomed, developed and launched over the coming months."

Contributed by: Mr Robin Crumby  
Organisation: Melcrum Publishing Ltd.  
Location: London



"The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."

William James, Philosopher (1842-1910)

## STAND BACK

"My company went from a £46K loss-making scenario to £750K profit in a matter of four years. This was achieved by empowering the workforce and giving them the support, training and financial incentive to make it happen. The hardest part is the stepping back by the entrepreneurial leader to allow the team to grow up and take responsibility for their own destiny. We now all earn more, like our jobs better, are considerably more efficient and are forever optimistic about the future."

Contributed by: Mr Gerry Merten  
Organisation: Paragon Inks (Holdings) Ltd  
Location: Broxburn, West Lothian

## FAMILY VALUES

"I only have experience of a small business but I believe that having a great respect for ones employees is the way ahead. I like to operate my business more as an extended family. If one is open and honest with employees then they will reciprocate. It is this communication and interest in each other which is so important and building relationships with employees is the key to success. Take advantage of ideas from the shop floor - after all, staff there may well know more of the intricacies than you do."

Contributed by: Dr Chris Williams  
Organisation: Williams Dental Practice  
Location: Barnstable, Devon

## NOT IN YOUR IMAGE

"As your company grows do not look for someone the same as you. They do not exist, so accept the fact that everyone is different. Value that difference as alternative ways of tackling growth and without having a blame culture, give staff the opportunity to learn and develop from their mistakes."

Contributed by: Mr Allan Buck  
Organisation: Printoff Graphic Arts Ltd  
Location: Nelson, Lancashire

## INDIVIDUAL NICHE

"Listen to all members of your team, find out what they want out of both their lives and from working for your organisation. Look at your business strategic plan and find a niche for the individual which will bring them closer to achieving their personal goals whilst driving your strategy forward."

Contributed by: Dr Nigel Charlton  
Organisation: The Totton Dental Centre  
Location: Totton, Hampshire

## LEAD AS YOU WOULD BE LED

"My top tip has to be 'Lead so that you would want to follow someone like YOURSELF'. So many times I hear managers complaining about the difficulties they are having with their staff or recounting bad practices which they themselves are guilty of doing and I think - well what do you expect, they are only following your example."

Contributed by: Miss Anthea Holligan  
Organisation: Ashram Housing Association  
Location: Sparkbrook, Birmingham

## MAGAZINE OFFER

"Once a year, specially selected clients are invited to select a years subscription to a leisure magazine of their choice. There are many advantages to this. Initially, we are thought of as being generous. Then, as the gift is tailored to the client's individual interests, we are also seen as thoughtful. Plus the client receives 12 regular reminders of our company."

Magazine subscriptions are also offered to all staff. The benefits of this include that staff feel like part of the same team and that staff are seen as important as clients. It demonstrates that Directors have an interest in the personal lives of individuals and helps discourage a 24 hours work lifestyle!"

Contributed by: Roger Tilbrook  
Organisation: PSK Prout Tilbrook  
Location: Batley, West Yorkshire



"Change is the only 'constant' we have in life and work. We need to learn to embrace and accept its inevitability and learn to 'go with the flow'."

Ann Cartwright, Family First Limited, Nottingham

## THE PRIZE - A MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS

The 'Masterclass' provided by Cranfield School of Management is a real opportunity for our winners. Cranfield is renowned for its strong links with industry and business and provides a range of activities, including postgraduate degree programmes, management development, research and consultancy.

As well as having an excellent reputation for developing larger organisations, Cranfield also specialises in working with small to medium sized businesses by developing specialist programmes and conducting research.

Cranfield provides an environment where entrepreneurs and their staff can come together in a context that is designed to both challenge their thinking and support the translation of that thinking into action. For further information about the Enterprise Group at Cranfield visit their website:

[www.cranfield.ac.uk/som/enterprise](http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/som/enterprise) or telephone Michelle Kent on 01234 754312.



## FIND OUT ABOUT OTHER INVESTORS IN PEOPLE UK AWARDS

Investors in People UK also sponsors a number of other awards designed to recognise outstanding achievement from Investor in People organisations. These include:

**NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS** recognise excellence, best practice and innovation in the business community.

For more information go to:

[www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/The + National + Business + Awards + 2003.htm](http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/The+National+Business+Awards+2003.htm)

**NATIONAL TRAINING AWARDS** are the 'Oscars' of the training world and are given for exceptionally effective training. For more information go to:

[www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/NTA + 2003.htm](http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/NTA+2003.htm)

**THE GROWING BUSINESS AWARDS** include the 'Innovative Company of the Year Award' sponsored by Investors in People UK to recognise the business which has 'buzz', a track record of improvement and embraces modern practices. For more information go to:

[www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/The + Growing + Business + Awards + 2003.htm](http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Internet/PromotionsandEvents/Promotions/The+Growing+Business+Awards+2003.htm)



# design and build:

## Investors in People blueprint for construction

Having trailed other sectors in adopting Investors in People, the construction industry is now deepening its foundations and aiming to build high.

No industry captures the imagination quite so much as construction. The transformation of London's Docklands illustrates this perfectly. Enormous buildings, staggering in size, bold in design and evoke admiration and controversy in equal degrees.

Just to look at them inspires awe and respect for the people who have built them. But if you want to get a plumber or a brickie...well, they are either not there or they seem like a bunch of cowboys.

So it is not surprising, perhaps, that the construction industry has proved one of the more difficult for the Investors in People Standard to penetrate. The conditions of the industry are well-known. There is a dominance of small business, a vast number of subcontractors and projects are often undertaken in the context of immensely tight time pressures. The odds, it may seem, are stacked heavily against managers having the time or the motivation to take a long term view of their needs and invest in the skills of the people they employ.

### CHANGE AHEAD

But, even in this toughest of industries, attitudes are changing as the looming crisis over skills shortages threatens the future viability of employers. Other pressures too are coming into play, not least to improve site safety and avoid penalties from the Health & Safety Executive. Meanwhile, public opinion has finally lost patience with bodged jobs around their homes and workplaces. The time had come for the industry to respond.

The starting point came a couple of years ago when a major review of the industry, titled 'Rethinking Construction', underlined the need for much greater emphasis to be placed on the people dimension. The review made a considerable impact

and a consensus emerged from all the interested parties that the time had come for decisive action to lift the competence of the industry's workforce.

One of the best ways of doing this, argued both the Government and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), was to encourage more companies to become recognised as Investors in People. In fact, as a result of Rethinking Construction, the industry has now set itself an ambitious target of an annual increase of 20% in the number of construction workers working for recognised Investors in People employers and co-ordinated work is now going ahead as a partnership between Investors in People UK and the CITB (as well as other industry bodies) to galvanise interest in the Standard.

Rhetoric alone is not going to be enough. The starting point has to be the business case. So in the Autumn 2002 a survey collected evidence from a cross-section of construction companies (all of whom were recognised Investors in People) as to what they saw as the benefits. The clear conclusion of the survey was that while the overwhelming majority saw distinct advantages there was no standard pattern to these. Instead, different businesses derived different improvements according to their circumstances.

### BENEFITS

For example, in some cases gaining recognition contributed directly towards securing ISO9000 accreditation, a matter of increasing importance for some parts of the industry (for example, it is a requirement when working for London Underground).



## design and build: Investors in People blueprint for construction continued...

In other cases it played an important role in improving internal communications to support continuous improvement processes. One employer observed, "We have a lot of rough diamonds here but that doesn't mean they are stupid. Training them up, talking to them, asking for their views has definitely made them feel good about themselves and about the firm."

Of course, in a number of instances the Investors in People principles were seen as playing a critical role in supporting the business's training strategy (starting frequently in relation to health and safety). This amounted in some cases to using the Standard as a tool to achieve a step change in management. "The disciplined approach to training people, talking regularly to them, helping them to take this business forward made me a total convert", commented one previously sceptical manager.

Meanwhile, for some others the direct financial benefits in terms of gaining a grant from CITB, which to some extent recompensed them for the levy they had paid, were not to be sniffed at.

In a number of cases the differentiation benefits were important - that is being able to show to potential customers and to employees that the firm was genuinely committed to training its staff. As one boss commented, "The industry as a whole has such a rotten reputation as an employer that we must start showing people that we value them, train them and can give them good careers."

Significantly, some found the Standard useful as a mechanism for ensuring that consideration was given to stepping back and seeing the big picture (such as revising procedures and reviewing where the business is going).

In other words, there is an extensive palate of benefits which the Standard is generating for the industry. The question now is how to persuade more employers to pick it up and start using it.

### CO-OPERATION IS THE KEY

Overall promotional activities are being driven forward by the Construction Sector Investors in People Working Group. This is a broadly-based representative body drawn from employers organisations, professional institutes, the Learning and Skills Council, Investors in People UK and others. It reflects the value in having all the agencies facing in the same direction and working co-operatively together. One recent coup is the agreement of an accord between the CITB and the Small Business Service to cement co-operation between the two bodies in relation to Investors in People. An Innovation Fund has been established to support various initiatives and each project approved so far has designated achievement of Investors in People as a primary outcome.

Another example comes in the Blueprint for Building Performance run by the CITB and others, which provides a framework to support the achievement of the Investors in People Standard by focusing clearly on business improvement. A minimum total of 16 Blueprint programmes will be delivered during 2003 by the CITB's National Construction College.

CITB Training Advisers are particularly important as the gate-keepers in promoting the Standard and guiding employers to its achievement. As a result, there has been extensive training of the Advisers in the requirements and benefits of the Standard.

Complementing this, the CITB has introduced a Training and Development Plan to its Grants Scheme which links funding to the production of a structured approach to training and development.

This supports the promotion of the Standard by reinforcing the need to build the training strategy into the business planning cycle.



"Don't try to be the same as other businesses - only better. Try to be different."

Paul Sloane

No programme would be complete today without an Internet dimension. An interesting on-going development is between CITB and the Learning and Skills Council to adapt the Laurel Online facility, which provides support for Investors in People achievement via the Internet, for the construction industry.

The CITB's own website will also contain an Investors in People page including case studies to illustrate the benefits of gaining recognition. CITB is also working with Investors in People UK to customise its [yourpeoplemanager.com](http://yourpeoplemanager.com) advice service under the title [buildingyourpeople.com](http://buildingyourpeople.com).

Finally, and underlining the point made by many recognised organisations in the trade that the better informed the Assessors are about the construction industry the more useful their contribution. CITB is working with Investors in People to produce a training programme for employees at the Quality Centres.

Put all these activities and initiatives together and you have a very comprehensive strategy. Everyone involved now waits with interest to see how the numbers start to mount.

**For more information on Investors in People in the construction industry contact Peter Russian at Investors in People UK.**



## BUILDING ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS: TALES OF SUCCESS

DD Construction's clients require high levels of certification, regulation and compliance. Investors in People was able to help the company to secure these.

But there were other benefits as well. A client quality audit produced this comment, "I've never seen such a good approach to personnel management." Other clients said they respected DD because "they know we do things properly." Meanwhile, Spicers (Builders) Ltd. commented that the Standard had helped them to multi-skill their workers and also enabled them to adopt a more systematic approach to management training.

Bluestone Construction was able to report that by following Investors in People principles it was much better placed to retain employees in a very tight market. The business's branding had improved considerably and - no coincidence - financial results have been excellent.



# work-life balance: an end to 9-5 ?

The launch of Investors in People UK's Work-life Balance Model promises greater harmony for everyone at work as well as at home.

Most of us have to juggle our lives these days. But why do we have to do it with one arm tied behind our back?

Increasingly people feel that the conflict between work obligations on the one hand and personal life on the other sets up tensions which lead to dissatisfaction and, in many cases, underperformance in the workplace.

Wouldn't it be great if some of the constraints could be released to enable a smooth flow between work and the rest of our lives? Wouldn't we all benefit from greater balance between what we do at work and outside it?

The new Work-life Balance Model, launched by Investors in People UK in June, goes a long way towards supporting this. As with the Standard and other Models - Recruitment and Selection, Leadership and Management - it does not tell organisations how they should structure their work or conditions. Instead, it provides a framework so that employers can plan how they can organise work to enable a better balance to be achieved. And whatever methods are used, the underlying premise is that everyone will benefit - employer and employee alike. If that does not happen then clearly no balance is being achieved.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE ?

In recent years there has been an intensifying debate about the rights, wrongs and responsibilities of recognising the value of providing greater cohesion between the various elements in their lives. The Work-life Balance Model is designed to help organisations of all types to address this key issue.

As the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) commented in supporting the launch of the Model, "Our aim is that people should feel they have more choice and control over their working hours, and that more companies are able to gain the business benefits of flexible working. We are very encouraged about the development of a voluntary Work-life Balance Model. It is an important factor in meeting our aim of integrating the

theory and practice of work-life balance into the mainstream business agenda."

According to Laurence Collins of Ceridian Centrefile, who worked with Investors in People UK on the development of the Model, a work-life balance strategy should address the needs of both individuals and organisations in order to deliver solutions for both.

This emphasis on individual needs is very important. At a time when diversity is increasingly characterising the workplace there can no longer be any one approach fits all. The needs of people are likely to vary widely according to age, stage in life, gender, wider family circumstances and so on. An effective work-life balance strategy will have the flexibility to accommodate the needs of different types of employees so that they can all contribute to the business.

## THE CONTEXT

A variety of factors have stimulated employers to think seriously about this issue for some time. Social trends have been leading the way with people of all ages and both sexes contributing to a rising tide of popular opinion which challenges the traditional assumptions about a fixed static framework to our working lives.

For example, along with carers and those with family commitments, there are many other people who want to scale down their working hours, and many pensioners must continue to work later in their lives so as to supplement their incomes. All of these people will benefit from new ways of working.

## THE MODEL

Of course, some employers are already operating flexible working to a greater or lesser extent. In many cases they have adopted them specifically so as to be able to attract and retain



Much will depend on individual managers. It will be crucial for them to buy into the concept and make it work for their team or organisation.

employees. But often these practices have been piecemeal or only partial in their coverage. Few employers have thought them through comprehensively. As a result only limited value has been derived from them. What was needed was a way of formalising work-life balance practices so that a range of ad-hoc tactics could become an overall strategy.

That is why a group of interested parties including Employers for Work Life Balance (EfWLB) and the DTI approached Investors in People UK to develop a Model which could guide employers towards a more systematic approach.

The result is the Work-life Balance Model (see main principles and indicators in box) whose comprehensive approach should provide benefits to individuals, employers and customers alike. Investors in People UK have worked closely with the EfWLB, the DTI and the TUC to ensure that the Model is based on good practice and has been rigorously tested.

## THE STRUCTURE

The principal format of the Model echoes the structure of the Investors in People Standard with a cyclical pattern of Culture - Strategy - Action - Effectiveness. Again as the DTI has pointed out, "adding the Work-life Balance Model to the Investors in People product range represents a natural progression in both promoting and embedding work-life balance. It is what employers and employees want."

According to Laurence Collins, the cornerstone of successfully implementing work-life processes is ensuring that the right culture is created. This cannot be expected to happen overnight especially in organisations where the traditional pattern is that work always comes first (and where personal matters are regarded as an irritating obstruction). But this does not mean that a uniform culture has to be imposed. Again as Laurence Collins points out, "The important issue is for individual organisations to work out what work-life balance

means for them and the kind of systems and processes which can be implemented for their organisation."

It is important to emphasise, therefore, that the Model is NOT a list of specific policies and procedures. Rather than providing all the answers to the work-life balance question it offers, in effect, questions which an organisation should be asking itself and a yardstick for internal measurement of where it is on the work-life balance continuum.

## THE BENEFITS

Foremost amongst the issues to arise will be what benefits the organisation wishes to derive from using it. As the Department of Trade & Industry points out, the business benefits which can be gained through implementing flexible working include improved recruitment and retention, reduced absenteeism and sick leave, and more flexible provision of services. But this is just a start. How those objectives are achieved - whether by job-sharing, part-time working, flexitime, sabbaticals, shift-swapping, home working, annualised hours, four day weeks or flexible benefits - will be for employers to determine for themselves.

As always, much will depend on individual managers. It will be crucial for them to buy into the concept and make it work for their team or organisation. Again, as Laurence Collins comments, "There are many ways of achieving balance. We are not producing a list of these methods because it is up to the individual organisation to work through to what suits them.

No doubt there are many ways which have yet to be thought of but they will start to emerge and be developed as the Work-life Balance Model becomes more widely adopted."

**So from now on it's over to you.  
Go seek balance!**



## work-life balance: an end to 9-5? continued...

### Model listing FOUR PRINCIPLES and accompanying TEN INDICATORS

"The Investors in People Work-life Balance Model will, for the first time, provide both employers and employees with a clear understanding of the type of issues and approaches that can be deployed in flexible working - providing positive and tangible benefits for all."

Department of Trade & Industry

"Our work with Employers for Work Life Balance has shown that many organisations are now engaged with the business case for work-life balance. What these employers now need is help in taking action. The new Investors in People Model will give them a clear focus for making progress. It was clear to EfWLB that Investors in People UK could take on the challenge of helping organisations move forward on work-life balance issues because of its impressive track record for improving people management processes and practices, and its experience in these areas.

Organisations who use the Model will find the actions they undertake will improve their recruitment and retention capability and enhance their status as employers of choice. In a tightening labour market this is key."

Sally Evans, Head of Equality and Diversity, Lloyds TSB

"The Employers for Work Life Balance was set up to share best practice in work-life balance. We approached Investors in People UK because it offers the best framework in which to communicate best practice to the widest audience. The Investors in People Work-life Balance Model will be the EfWLB's legacy to British industry."

Peter Ellwood, Chair of the Employers for Work Life Balance

### THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Model has undergone extensive development and testing to ensure it is as clear and relevant as possible both for employers and Assessors. Already a number of pilot organisations have tested its viability. The experiences of two of them are given on the following pages.

As Michael Tanner, who assessed Cranborne Chase Communities, points out, "The Model is not touchy-feely at all. It is tough and rigorous. My view is that by using it many employers will give themselves a fresh start. It will make them ask questions about how they assign work and it will ultimately have the affect of making work a more pleasant activity."

Michael points out that the Model does not represent an attack on the long hours culture as such but it does aim to make such regimes more workable and liveable for employees in the wider context of their lives. "By giving people more choice and more flexibility, individuals will feel much more positive about the organisation they work for."

As with the launch of any new benchmark, it will take some time to develop a body of experience as to what good evidence will look like. But as Jann Heigh (who assessed the Castleton House Hotel) comments, "Much will depend on the answer to the question - has the organisation got the right kind of mind-set to support work-life balance? This will go far beyond simple work flexibility," she says. "It's really about the kind of dialogue that takes place between individuals and managers. Does the right level of trust exist? Is there respect for people at every level? Are people valued equally?' These are the kinds of questions that I'll be asking when I am assessing organisations against the Model."

[IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WORK LIFE BALANCE MODEL TALK TO YOUR REGIONAL QUALITY CENTRE](#)



“Reinvent yourself, even when you are successful!”  
Professor Stephane Garelli

## The Work-life Balance Model

Principles	Indicators	Evidence
<p><b>Culture</b></p> <p>The culture of the organisation creates an environment in which work-life balance is recognised and valued.</p>	<p><b>1 Work-life balance is central to the organisation's values and how it works.</b></p>	<p>There is a clear and consistent definition of work-life balance, which is appropriate for the organisation.</p> <p>People confirm that the way the organisation works acknowledges and supports work-life balance.</p> <p>People believe that everyone has equal access to career development, regardless of their work-life balance choices.</p>
	<p><b>2 Managers take responsibility for the success of the work-life balance strategy.</b></p>	<p>Top managers can show how they support work-life balance.</p> <p>People can confirm that managers at all levels contribute to achieving the work-life balance strategy.</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b></p> <p>The work-life balance strategy is central to the organisation's aims and objectives.</p>	<p><b>3 The work-life balance strategy is developed to help the organisation achieve its aims and objectives.</b></p>	<p>Managers can show how the work-life balance strategy is designed to contribute to the organisation's aims and objectives.</p> <p>Top managers are aware of relevant employment legislation and changing patterns of society, and how these are included in their work-life balance strategy.</p> <p>The organisation can show how its work-life balance strategy is designed to reduce levels of stress that affect people in the workplace.</p> <p>The organisation can show that its approach to managing and developing people takes account of its work-life balance strategy.</p>
	<p><b>4 The organisation takes account of all relevant parties when developing and communicating its work-life balance strategy.</b></p>	<p>The organisation can show that it has consulted its people and their representatives when developing the Work-life Balance strategy.</p> <p>The organisation can show that it has taken account of the needs of external stakeholders when developing the work-life balance strategy.</p> <p>The organisation can show that its work-life balance strategy reflects the different needs of people across the organisation.</p> <p>People can describe the effective information, support and consultation process in relation to work-life balance solutions.</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>The organisation has successful work-life balance solutions.</p>	<p><b>5 Work-life balance solutions are developed and put into practice according to the needs of the organisation.</b></p>	<p>The organisation makes sure that managers have the resources they need to put work-life balance solutions into practice.</p> <p>The organisation makes sure that the solutions take account of relevant good practice and employment legislation.</p>



The launch of Investors in People UK's Work-life Balance Model promises greater harmony for everyone at work as well as at home.

## The Work-life Balance Model continued

Principles	Indicators	Evidence
<b>Action</b> continued... The organisation has successful work-life balance solutions.	<b>6 Work-life balance solutions take account of the needs of the individual.</b>	<p>Managers can confirm that work is organised to take account of people's needs and those of the organisation.</p> <p>People can confirm that work is organised to take account of their needs and those of the organisation.</p>
	<b>7 Work-life balance solutions are effectively put into practice.</b>	<p>Managers at all levels understand what they need to do to support the work-life balance solutions.</p> <p>People can confirm that the organisation's approach to work-life balance is explained in recruitment and induction activity.</p> <p>People can confirm that there are clear guidelines and practices in place to allow everyone to achieve the agreed work-life balance goals.</p> <p>People can describe how their managers are effective in supporting the work-life balance solutions.</p> <p>People can confirm that their own work-life balance solutions are regularly reviewed.</p> <p>People can confirm that examples of good practice and experiences are shared internally and successes are recognised.</p>
<b>Effectiveness</b> The organisation has successful work-life balance solutions.	<b>8 The work-life balance strategy and solutions improve the performance of the organisation.</b>	<p>The organisation can show that its work-life balance solutions benefit both the organisation and its people.</p> <p>The organisation can show that the review and evaluation of its work-life balance strategy takes account of stakeholders' needs.</p>
	<b>9 The organisation continually improves its approach to work-life balance.</b>	<p>The organisation can show that it is continuously improving.</p> <p>People can confirm that the organisation continually improves its approach to work-life balance.</p>



## Work-life balance in practice: CASTLETON HOUSE HOTEL

### Creating an idyllic country hotel means plenty of hard work - but that doesn't mean it can't be balanced.

The Vale of Strathmore, three miles from Glamis Castle and not far from the Tay and Dundee, is ideal holidaying country. Perfect, in fact, for a small country hotel. So when Verity Nicholson and her partner David Webster bought the Castleton House Hotel a few years ago they were confident that they had a winner on their hands.

"I'm afraid the previous owners actually went bankrupt," says Verity. "But we felt that it had all the makings of a success." And so it has proved. With its AA Two Rosette restaurant and regular business from corporate clients as well as a good local following, the hotel has proved to be every bit as successful as Verity had hoped. But of course, it comes at a price. The leisure enjoyed by the visitors comes at the expense of the manager's total dedication. Verity admits that she and David live and breath the hotel. "It's your life. It's everything to us. I'm thinking about it all the time," she confesses.

### SEAMLESS LIVES

So where does work-life balance fit in?

"It's very difficult," says Verity. "You have to be disciplined about it. I make a point of spending time away from the hotel and treating myself doing girly things" she says, "But we also socialise a lot with our employees because the people we work with are also our friends. We can't really distinguish between where work begins and ends socially."

This kind of seamlessness between work and life might seem to contradict any idea of a work-life balance but Verity believes that flexibility comes from mixing them together. "We have 14 employees some of whom are part-time including students and gap year people," she explains. "In an area like this everyone knows everyone else and this creates a sense of community which is also based on the idea of having fun at work."

It is the theme of fun which - although it does not feature formally in the Work-life Balance Model - really sums up the philosophy of the hotel. Or, put another way, there is a strong concern for, and interest in, the employees as individuals. Verity leaves plenty of scope for staffing the hotel and restaurant around people's availability. Two of the students who have been working part-time will join on a full-time basis as soon as they have completed their examinations. Anniversaries are celebrated by paying for the individuals concerned to have a good night out. And success is celebrated with lots of enjoyment - drinks at the end of a good evening and champagne all round when business goals are achieved. There is also support for a five-a-side football team which plays on Wednesday afternoons and a weekly lottery for those who work in the hotel. "Everyone stops to hear the result!" says Verity.

### A USEFUL TOOL

A key feature of being able to operate in a flexible way is that people are properly trained and can fill in for colleagues. The hotel became a recognised Investor in People soon after Verity took over because she valued, as a start-up operation, the support that a systematic approach to development could give. Induction in particular improved by following the Standard.

The same applies to the Work-life Balance Model. "I found it very useful. And I think it would be even more useful in larger establishments where management don't know their employees as well as we do. I think that if other employers adopted the Model as a tool it could really make a positive difference."



# flexible working: do you have a right to it?

New rights to apply for flexible working have just been given to parents. But check out the detail before you change your schedule.

As part of a wider move to make the workplace more family-friendly, the Employment Act 2000 included a number of provisions relating to the right to request flexibility in relation to caring for young children.

Those provisions came into effect this Spring and the result is likely to be a step change in attitudes towards parenthood.

Before rewriting the diary, though, check the detail. The Act gives people the right to REQUEST flexible arrangements - it does not automatically give the right to flexibility itself. So it is important to get the changes into perspective. However, the legislation formalises the value that society places on parenthood and its responsibilities. In conjunction with other initiatives - including the Work-life Balance Model - it will help to shape new attitudes towards the need for people to be given, where possible, the opportunity to fulfil their responsibilities to their children.

## So how will the flexible work provisions apply?

### THE EMPLOYEE'S APPLICATION

First, eligibility. The legislation applies to people who:

- Have been employed for a period of 26 weeks or more and
- Are the parent, adoptive parent, guardian or foster parent (or the spouse or partner of one of these) of a child under the age of 6 (or, where the child is disabled, under the age of 18) and
- Has or expects to have, responsibility for bringing up the child.

### Secondly, how does it work?

An individual who wishes to take advantage of the legislation must make an application by stating:

- That they want to request a change in their terms and conditions under the legislation
- How they meet the eligibility requirements (as specified above)

- The change requested and the date from which it should become effective
- The effect which the change is likely to have on their employment and how it can be accommodated.

It is perhaps the last point which will be the most crucial and put to the test the extent to which flexibility can be achieved in practice. The onus is on the employee to make the case for flexibility by suggesting how a new arrangement can be reconciled with the demands of the work. A bit of imagination may be helpful here and almost certainly flexibility will be easier to achieve in organisations where the Work-life Balance Model is being followed.

### THE EMPLOYER'S RESPONSE

At this point the ball is in the court of the employer to respond according to a process laid down by the Act. If the employee's proposal is acceptable then a written response is necessary which specifies the variation agreement and when it will come into effect. If, on the other hand, the proposal is not acceptable then the matter starts to get complex. An employer cannot turn down the application flat. Instead they must hold a meeting within 28 days to discuss it with the applicant. At the meeting the applicant may bring along a colleague to support them in discussing the new arrangement.

At the meeting each side then puts their case. But, again, it is not open to the employer to simply rebuff the application. Instead, they must show that what is proposed will have a significantly detrimental affect on the business (a detailed list of acceptable reasons is included in the legislation). In the event of a rejection an appeal procedure can be applied.

Just how much impact the new legislation will have now remains to be seen. Remember, though, that before getting involved in the process you should consult an expert on the fine detail of the law. But the best advice for employers is not to approach it defensively. As the Work-life Balance Model suggests, creating balance is an opportunity not a challenge.



# sunday best

100 Best Companies to Work For? Yes, they're Investors in People.

It has become as eagerly - or nervously - awaited as a school report. But the publication each Spring of The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For is now a cult event amongst enlightened management.

An organisation's place within the table, or whether it appears at all, can be critical to an organisation's image, its self-esteem and its ability to recruit the best people. It is also likely to have an impact on its commercial success since organisations featured within the table are likely to be more highly rated by the market.

For Investors in People UK too there is a certain tingling when the table appears. Because if the ratings mean anything then the Standard should be evident in the list. So it is with a certain degree of satisfaction that an analysis of the Top 100 revealed that more than half of the organisations are recognised Investors in People - including four companies profiled in the following pages; No. 2 Richer Sounds, No. 40 Churchill Insurance, No. 55 Redwood and No 70 Loop Customer Management.

"This is excellent news but perhaps not that surprising," commented Peter Russian, Investors in People UK, Director of Development. "It reflects not just the degree of penetration of the Standard across a wide spectrum of British business but also the correlation between achieving the Standard and having satisfied and fulfilled employees."

## GETTING SATISFACTION?

Designed in conjunction with the Department of Trade & Industry, the aim of the survey was to discover the top companies where people gain most satisfaction and feel most valued and motivated.

Employees were invited to submit anonymously their rating of the employer against a wide range of criteria (see box). Two of the criteria - Leadership and Wellbeing - relate directly to Investors in People UK's recently launched new Models (Leadership and Management and Work-life Balance), while a number of the remainder overlap significantly with the Standard itself (especially Personal Growth and My Company).

Consequently there is no coincidence at the level of correlation between being recognised as an Investor in People and being included in the Top 100. Moreover, research undertaken during recent years by Investors in People UK had already shown a

strong link between the Standard and having well-motivated people who identified strongly with their employer.

## PLUS FLEXIBILITY

What also emerged from the Sunday Times survey, however, was the benefits of operating a flexible regime and providing family friendly policies. As Dr Pete Bradon, a psychologist from Plymouth University, was quoted in the survey, "If a company can give people any flexi-working it will get the benefits." And as the survey itself observed, "Flexible working represents a good deal for employers, generating huge amounts of goodwill (and productivity)."

So while we can't all be in the Best 100 we can aim to function to the best of our ability. The Investors in People Standard plus the new Work-life Balance Model looks like a powerful combination.

To register for 100 Best Companies 2004 go to:  
[www.bestcompanies.co.uk](http://www.bestcompanies.co.uk)

## KEY CRITERIA FOR 100 BEST COMPANIES

Organisations featured in the Best 100 were assessed by their employees against the following eight criteria:

1. LEADERSHIP - how did employees feel about the head of the organisation and the senior managers?
2. MY MANAGER - how did employees feel about their immediate boss and the way they were managed day-to-day?
3. PERSONAL GROWTH - how did people feel they were stretched and challenged by their job?
4. WELLBEING - how did people feel about stress, pressure and the balance between their work and home lives?
5. MY TEAM - how did people feel about their immediate colleagues?
6. GIVING SOMETHING BACK - how did employees feel about what their organisation puts back into society and the local community, and how much it is driven by publicity and profit?
7. MY COMPANY - how people feel about the organisation they work for as opposed to the people they work with?
8. FAIR DEAL - how good people feel their pay and benefits are?



## sunday best continued...

### BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR...

#### RICHER SOUNDS

##### Nudging the Top of the Hit Parade

Going up to Number 2 in the Sunday Times Hot 100, Richer Sounds has leaped one place since last year when it came into the charts for the first time on a bronze bullet to reach Number 3. Can it go even higher next year to knock Microsoft off the top? Well, that's in the hands of its employees...

"What's great about the Sunday Times listing is that it is based on feedback from our own colleagues," says Training and Recruitment Director, John Clayton. "The fact that they are endorsing what we are doing gives us great reassurance." Richer Sounds may sell hi-fi separates but Founder and Chairman, Julian Richer, recognised very early that customer service can make the vital difference. "We recruit friendly, partying people who are passionate about service," says Clayton bluntly. "We don't recruit miserable people."

In fact, a very high proportion of Richer's recruits are customers, already familiar with the ethos and style of the company. Then, through extensive training the company builds on their enthusiasm to make them experts in sales.

"We opted to go for Investors in People recognition because it is a prestigious award which illustrates that we do right by our people," explains Clayton. "The process of assessment has become more streamlined over the years and we intend sticking with it."

While the foundation of Richer's success lies in excellent induction, training and an on-going appraisal system based on score-cards, there is also a strong emphasis on incentivising performance through cash rewards. "The culture of this organisation is so unique," says Clayton. "All our processes are home-grown."

So, inspired by Julian Richer's infectious enthusiasm, Richer Sounds continues to go from strength-to-strength.

#### RICHER SOUND'S WINNING FEATURES

- Careful recruitment of lively personalities
- Strong induction featuring shadowing mentors
- Continuous appraisal
- Performance incentives

#### CHURCHILL INSURANCE

##### The Bulldog which is Best in Class

Buying motor insurance is not a matter of discretion. If you own a car then you must have it. That may sound good for the insurers but the downside is there is little scope for differentiation. Profits per policy are tight and rival rates are highly competitive. The only way to succeed is by attracting very high volumes of customers.

Churchill Insurance, whose public image is the avuncular bulldog, has done that in spades. With sales increasing by 15% in 2002 and employee numbers increasing by 50%, the organisation has shown that one factor above all can make a difference - customer service from its people.

"Motor insurance is a standard product and people tend to opt for the cheapest they can get," says Marie-Ange Bouchard, Executive Director of Churchill. "But quality of service can swing the customer your way. You can make them feel that they are not just a number."

Attracting and retaining people with the right personalities to deal with the customers is, therefore, critical to Churchill's success. "We became involved with Investors in People because we wanted a Standard to demonstrate that we are a good employer," said Ms Bouchard. "We liked the way Investors in People has developed and appreciated the fact that it is now a two-way procedure. What we also value is that it is not a lifetime achievement award. Instead, it is a tool for continuous improvement."

Churchill has a major Learning and Development Department which supports employees gaining Chartered Insurance Institute qualifications, and is rigorous in ensuring that all its own courses are tailored exactly to meet the organisation's needs. The company now uses the Investors in People assessment process as a means of gaining feedback on how it is performing and takes the comments from Assessors very seriously to improve its systems.

As a result Churchill was not too surprised by its success in the Sunday Times Best 100. "The challenge now is to go even further up the table!" says Ms Bouchard.

#### KEYS TO CHURCHILL'S SUCCESS

- Recruits with a view to customer service
- Big investment in training
- Strong support for career development



sunday best continued...

## REDWOOD

### Communicating success

The transition from successful start-up company to thriving, medium sized business is never easy. Once the payroll starts to rocket, relationships become less personal and there is a danger that it can all spiral out of control. For Redwood, publisher of prestigious customer magazines for big name clients, a key part of the answer came in the shape of Investors in People.

"When we re-launched in 1994, following our split from the BBC, we had just fifty employees and were pretty unstructured," explains Director Sue Thomas. "We were very strong on our customer-focus but we had no formalisation of systems and our style was pretty laid-back. As we expanded we needed to grow up as an organisation. Investors in People enabled us to do that."

Redwood came to Investors in People through the most impeccable source - the dad of one of the Directors recommended it! And as the Board started to work with it they quickly saw benefits. "Using the Standard made us more serious about how we communicated with our employees. As a publisher we assumed we were good at that but benchmarking ourselves against the Standard highlighted the gaps."

The company now has an intranet, weekly e-mail bulletins and a regular 'Away Day' to ensure that employees are kept fully informed about where the business is going. Maybe the real testament to the Standard, however, comes through the employees response to the appraisal system.

"Fifty per cent of our people are creatives so instinctively they do not like being measured," says Ms Thomas. "But the flexibility of the Standard works perfectly for us. Employees are disappointed if their appraisal is postponed for any reason. As a company we value highly the measurement of our effectiveness and monitoring improvement. Investors in People enables us to do that with our people."

It also has immense business value. "Our clients know that our people are our best asset so they too are reassured that we are an Investor in People."

### REDWOOD'S WINNING FEATURES

- Excellent communications
- Dynamic appraisal
- Focus on creative energies.

## LOOP CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

### Better services through happy people

Press 1 for job satisfaction; Press 2 for flexible working; Press 3 for optimism about the future. And if you want all of these - press Loop Customer Management.

The recorded message at Loop Customer Management in Bradford doesn't actually say this - but perhaps it should. As a Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For organisation, the business was delighted to be featured in the list, not least because it provides an external endorsement for the quality of its approach to employees. Much the same applied when Loop first became an Investor in People.

"We felt as a company that we are really good on the people front," said Nicola Wilson. "And one of our motives for going for Investors in People was to be able to demonstrate this, both to potential employees and potential clients. It also reinforced our confidence as an employer that we were doing the right things when it comes to employment."

Loop provides a contact centre and other customer services on behalf of a range of clients such as the National Blood Service, the Welsh Tourist Board and major utilities. In a competitive market its achievements have been based on the clear recognition that, in the electronic age with so many communications being undertaken by telephone, the best service is provided by people who can relate to customers in a human, personable way. "We tend to recruit people from their mid-20s upwards who are good communicators and have life experience. Keeping our employees happy is a key part of Loop's success. Happy, well-motivated people will give a better level of services" says Nicola.

To achieve this, Loop has introduced a series of positive people systems and as a result the business has recruited an extra 200 employees in the past three years. As for the future? It has further ambitious plans for expansion.

### LOOP'S WINNING FEATURES

- People perform strongly as a team through both working and socialising together
- Loop knows its peaks and troughs of customer demand and can build employees flexibility around these
- Support is given to shift swapping
- There are opportunities for job sharing and home working.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



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