

CASE STUDY



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | South
West

TURNERS OPTOMETRISTS

‘An amazing place to work’ – a quote given by one of our staff during our recent Investors in People review. All of the planning, measuring, evaluating, communicating, continuous improvement activities and watching the bottom line blurred in focus when I read this in our report. What makes a good business great? – a fantastic team – and working with Investors in People has certainly been a positive and rewarding experience for all of the team at Turners Optometrists.”

Janet Hatt
Business Director

BACKGROUND

Size:	12 employees
Sector:	Health
Location:	Bridgwater, Somerset
Status:	Most recently recognised August 2009. First recognised in 2000. Recognised 9 years. Achieved Gold status in 2009, are Investors in People Champions and Janet Hatt is an Investors in People Employee Representative

THE ORGANISATION

Established over 40 years ago, Turners Optometrists has been with the current ownership for the past 20 years. They provide the highest standard of eyecare and the widest range of frames, lenses, sunglasses and sports eyewear available. Their ranges of clinical services and products are now wider than they have ever been. Turners are one of only a few optometrists who own their own Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT) scanner – a highly advanced piece of equipment for screening a wide range of eye problems.



Janet Hatt (left) and Richard Llewellyn (Senior Partner of Turners Optometrists) receiving their Gold certificate from Jane Roberts of Investors in People South West

- **people enjoyed the assessment process and the team involvement.**
- **staff understand the business and give a huge amount of feedback. They feel a huge amount of loyalty to the company**
- **having Investors in People has certainly helped through this difficult time of recession – Turners is still thriving and attracting new clients.**

THE CHALLENGE

In 1996 Turners Optometrists realised they needed a big change programme to move away from the high street competition. They needed to do 'something different' and decided to concentrate on quality. They had already undertaken ISO 9001 in order to get their systems in place and also followed the Business Excellence Model which they knew to be very successful in developing organisations. But they were very aware that the 'people' side of the business was not being addressed in a measurable way.

THE STRATEGY

Turners took a look at the Investors in People framework and mapped it against the Business Excellence Model (EFQM). They realised they were actually already doing much of the work required by Investors in People and that it fitted very comfortably with the ethos of the organisation. Janet Hatt found that many of the principles of Investors in People such as training and staff involvement were already embedded in the business, but issues such as evaluation needed further development.

Turners have what they call their 'Top 9 KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and these are communicated to the team each week, with any areas for improvement highlighted. During their Investors in People review of 2006, they realised that Leadership needed working on. Courses were arranged, sometimes with funding, and a clear difference between Leadership and Management was identified. At their most recent Investors in People review, with these KPIs in mind, Janet Hatt discussed with their assessor, Richard Knight, the possibility of working beyond the Standard and aiming for Bronze level.

They spent a couple of hours working through the framework and soon realised that their previous commitment to the ethos of Investors in People had paid off - they were in the position to 'go for Gold!' They looked for big gaps that needed improvement but there were no big gaps. A few small areas needed improvement and evaluation was the most difficult part and the organisation wanted to focus on business improvement with the team.

IMPACT

The impact of Training has always been at the forefront of Turners HR practices and they have worked, in co-operation with Investors in People, to

continue with their training programme.

Recently Turners became one of the very few Optometrists in the South West to purchase an Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT) Scanner – a highly advanced piece of equipment for screening a wide range of eye problems. Turners wanted to truly evaluate the benefits of purchasing such an expensive piece of equipment and used the Investors in People methods to do this.

People actually enjoyed the assessment process and the team involvement. They liked telling the assessor how they felt about their roles within the organisation.

Giving feedback when things go wrong can sometimes be difficult for people. So, to de-personalise it, a phantom member of staff has joined the team – Sid. Although Sid does not really exist, he has his own email address and staff can email Sid about any concerns they may have about issues that have occurred. The practice manager looks at Sid's email and if the same issues keep appearing, it is discussed at weekly staff meetings.

Positive feedback is also wanted and this is done through the MAD (Make a Difference) system, where anything good that has happened, such as a patient commenting on the good service they have received, is logged.

The business plan is available in full for all staff to see but a, more simple, diagrammatic version of the business plan is posted on the Intranet. By clicking on a specific area, the reader will be linked to the full document relating to that particular subject.

During the recent assessment the subject of Diversity was discussed. Turners found this a really interesting discussion. Staff had always been recruited on their ability to 'do the job' and felt they always dealt with people in their own way and were confident they were able to deal with people with special needs in a considerate and helpful way. But, as they had no Diversity Policy as such, they decided to discuss the issue further at an 'away-day'..

THE RESULTS

As a result of Investors in People, staff understand the business and give a huge amount of feedback. They feel a huge amount of loyalty to the company



and give of their best.

They found their Assessor, Richard Knight and their Adviser, Rhiannon Holman, extremely helpful. Janet commented that it was great to have an adviser and assessor who really understood the business. She saw it as a partnership and not someone yielding a big stick!

Staff turnover is low at Turners. Staff members trust the managers/owner to be honest about how they run things and Investors in People has helped to build relationships with the teams.

Having Investors in People has certainly helped through this difficult time of recession – Turners is still thriving and attracting new clients.

Turners are firmly committed to Investors in People. Not only have they been recognised for 10 years and hold Gold status, they are also Investors in People Champions and Janet Hatt is an Investors in People Employer Representative.