

CASE STUDY



First ScotRail

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Fiona Irvine, Human Resources Director



BACKGROUND

Size:	4200 employees
Sector:	Passenger Transport
Location:	Glasgow
Status:	Most recently recognised in 2008

THE ORGANISATION

First ScotRail is the largest regional operator in the UK, covering the widest geographical spread – from Carlisle in the north of England to the Highlands of Scotland, 350 miles away. It operates 95% of passenger rail services in Scotland, provides more than 2000 services daily and manages 342 stations. It is a diverse franchise, including Edinburgh to Glasgow services – one of the busiest intercity connections in Europe; Strathclyde services – the largest commuter network outside of London, and famous rural and scenic lines such as the Far North and West Highland routes. It also provides the Caledonian Sleeper services between Scotland and London. The Scottish Government announced in April 2008 that First ScotRail had received a three-year extension to its franchise to November 2014. Passenger growth is up by 20% and performance and satisfaction at record highs. First ScotRail, the Scottish Transport Operator of the Year and UK Passenger Operator of the Year, is committed to continually improving and developing services.

- **Employee engagement has been measured at 66%**
- **80% of managers now have personal objectives**
- **75% of employees have Time with Their Manager**
- **First ScotRail awarded a three year franchise extension**

THE CHALLENGE

In a service driven environment, Investors in People can make all the difference. First ScotRail's Human Resources Director, Fiona Irvine explains: "When bidding for a rail franchise everyone wants to raise the bar. Having Investors in People ensures we really set ourselves high standards with regard to our people." When winning the franchise for Scotland's national rail services it was a condition of the franchise that First ScotRail become an Investor in People organisation to help promote a strong customer focused culture.

The challenge for Fiona lay in introducing Investors in People as quickly as possible and embedding it solidly in the organisation.

THE STRATEGY

With a target of First ScotRail becoming Investors in People accredited within three years, Fiona set to work. She decided that to really hit the ground running the organisation would go forward for early assessment in September 2007. This method meant that the company could get an immediate indication of where it stood towards achieving Investors in People accreditation. The organisation could "bank" the indicators where it was doing well, and benefit from a detailed report advising where there were areas needing further development and what it could do to improve. Early in the process, one thing became clear. "We quickly understood that it was important to stop talking about 'Investors in People' and started talking about the tools imbedded within the framework. This approach has been really effective!"

It was important to Fiona that the organisation encourage recognising good service and rewards it appropriately. First ScotRail introduced several initiatives including thank you cards, an extra mile award, champions, and a pride award for the best team. A suggestions scheme was also introduced to further promote engagement. The organisation also made it possible to track customer praise right back to the member of staff involved. The organisation achieved Investors in People accreditation in July 2008, just 10 months after undertaking Early Assessment.

THE RESULTS

First ScotRail now has clearly defined processes in terms of business planning and objectives and Investors in People is firmly part of the organisation. Fiona explains "All the enablers towards IIP are in place and in use. It's highly effective and people are really up for using it – it's brilliant!"

The result has been a real culture change in the organisation. Staff engagement has been measured at 66%, 80% of managers have personal objectives and 75% of staff have had time with their managers: a commitment to two meetings with their manager a year. As Fiona says "This is only in Year One [of the plan] and is a fantastic start!"

In Fiona's estimation much of the current success of

the organisation can be attributed to the deep embedding of the company vision and values. "Ask any member of staff and they can tell you what our vision and values are and what they mean to them."

The results speak for themselves: First ScotRail has received a franchise extension of three years. "This was a significant win for us!", says Fiona.

Celebrating the success with staff members is high on First ScotRail's agenda with a major celebration day planned across the organisation and the launch of a Class 170 train named, appropriately, "Investor in People."

First ScotRail's challenging approach to introducing Investors in People has paid off. "I would absolutely recommend going for early assessment", Fiona stresses, "and you should not be afraid to find out where you are. It was absolutely invaluable to us and we worked really hard with the assessor to drive it through."

In July 2008, Investors in People Scotland launched New Choices, which allows an organisation to select areas of further development from the framework to focus on during a review to suit their own business objectives. "One of the things I like about the levels of the framework is that I can see so many areas where we can go now," says Fiona, "Investors in People has developed beyond my expectations. The sky's the limit! New Choices is just fantastic!"