

CASE STUDY



Anderson Strathern Solicitors

“Our people are our most valuable asset within the organisation and the Investors in People Framework has been a great tool to facilitate their continued development and support”

Robin Stimpson
Managing Partner 1996 - 2009



BACKGROUND

Size: 300 employees
Sector: Scottish full service law firm
Location: Across Scotland
Status: Recognised since 1998

THE ORGANISATION

Anderson Strathern is a modern, forward-thinking legal business. It provides a full range of advice to all corporate, commercial and private clients. It has created a number of specialisms that are now recognised as market leaders and which continue to drive the growth of the firm. Clients include international and national companies, public bodies, charities, banks, property developers and investors, landowners, educational and further educational institutions.

THEIR VISION

“We aim to be the best full service law firm in Scotland.”

- **In the period from 2005 to 2008, staff turnover decreased by 69%. In 2007-08 staff turnover was 11.7%. We believe that our continued commitment to developing our people has contributed to their loyalty to the firm.**
- **The firm has grown by 40% in the last 4 years. Following IIP principles has meant that we have developed the right skills in our people.**
- **Client service is top of our agenda. In the period 2006-2008, the number of client complaints deemed to be justified by the Law Society fell from two in 2006 to none in both 2007 and 2008.**

THE CHALLENGE

Anderson Strathern has been an Investor in People since 1998. We were one of the first law firms in Scotland to become IIP accredited and are proud to have retained the accreditation ever since. We were initially motivated to get involved as the IIP Standard tied in with what we were trying to achieve as a business with the help of our people. IIP represented best practice in terms of developing people to support business growth. We wanted a further opportunity to review current business practices and to assess how far those practices align with the recommended principles of investing in people.

Businesses that care for their staff produce staff that care for their clients – and ultimately client satisfaction is a key factor in the success of any business.

THE STRATEGY

We hoped to use the advice and best practice embedded in the Standard to develop a set of tools and guidelines to ensure that we got the best from our people, encouraging them to develop the skills we needed to grow and sustain the business.

We also believe that being an Investor in People would be beneficial in winning business. We increasingly find that potential clients seek to understand the quality of organisations with whom they deal, and are now asking for evidence of our business practice. Many of our clients are Investors in People, and sharing this philosophy strengthens our business relationships with our clients.

THE RESULTS

We have always recognised the value of having an experienced external specialist examine our business processes. The advice we have received over the years has always resulted in changes and improvements, some significant, to the way we invest in and develop our people.

Two of the main changes were a comprehensive and ongoing management development programme and a major overhaul of our performance development review system. We also brought in an Interview Toolkit to give Partners and managers a robust framework for recruitment. Partners and managers have been able to improve the way in which they develop their employees by understanding what motivates them and involving them in decision making appropriate to their role.

In addition, we have recently introduced an Integrated Management System which applies to all processes (environmental, quality and health and safety) that are required for the effective delivery of services to clients and protection of people and the environment. Alongside these major changes, we have implemented a wide range of smaller changes based on suggestions from our assessors.

Finally, we have also been able to promote Corporate Responsibility activities both in terms of the firm's strategy in promoting flexible and family-friendly working

arrangements and in helping develop employees' skills.

IMPACT OF INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Prior to our latest review we ran the Investors in People survey. We were delighted to get a very high 80% response rate. The survey showed that over 90% of our people believed in and shared the firm's vision and values, and over 95% have a sense of ownership and pride in working for the firm. In terms of staff retention, the survey confirmed that over 92% of people agree that their learning and development needs are met and they are given the opportunity to apply the learning as part of their role.

The vast majority of people also agreed that their career prospects had improved as a result of their learning and development and the way they had been managed.

We see these results as a 'win-win' situation – our people feel valued and in turn have up-to-date and relevant skills to ensure we provide the best client service possible. This feeds directly into the success we achieve as a business.