



Class leading engineering consultancy discovers they're also a top-scoring employer of choice

Client: Gifford
Sector: Business Services
Service: Employee Engagement

The Client

Gifford is a world leading consultancy of engineers and specialist advisers. They are responsible for many well known projects including the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the widening of the M25 to provide access to Heathrow's new Terminal Five and the Mary Rose Museum at Portsmouth.

Gifford had conducted an employee survey in 2004 but wanted to improve the speed and quality of the survey process and to benchmark their results against a substantial number of other organisations via a well established normative database. We were selected.

Employesurvey's Contribution

Following detailed discussions the previous survey questionnaire was thoroughly reviewed and restructured to improve clarity, relevance and benchmarking potential.

The new survey was run entirely online and achieved an excellent response rate of just under 80%. That was just the first of a number of remarkable findings which led Gifford's scores to take them to the very top of 180 organisations in the employ^esurveys normative database!

The Outcome

So what is it that makes Gifford such a great employer? When we analysed the organisation we identified 6 areas where Gifford have a distinctive culture.

1. Facilitative leadership

- Right from the top it is clear that the leadership is facilitative and not dictatorial.
- The leadership provided is based on acknowledgement that there is a symbiotic relationship with all members of the company - they all need each other to make it a success.
- The senior staff are visible and approachable.
- Communication is a huge part of the leadership, in which messages are communicated to all areas, sometimes via road-shows and presentations, in an open and honest manner.

2. Recruitment conducted by those in the know

- HR have minimal involvement in recruitment - those that are the hiring manager sift the applications and conduct the interviews as they are deemed to know best what fits their current team and what it is that they currently require.
- There is a mental imprint of what 'type of person' fits into the corporate culture and much of the recruitment process is based on finding an appropriate 'fit'.

3. Freedom to work and make decisions

- Staff are given freedom at an early stage - they are not bound by structures that stifle creativity and innovation
- There is the freedom to be creative, make decisions and take the initiative but with this staff have to be prepared to take responsibility for their actions too.
- It is appreciated that all leaders are different and so each team leader is allowed the freedom to manage his/her team as they see fit and how works best.

4. Not focused on profits

- Profit is not the sole focus of the business - there are people in place whose job it is to worry about this - the main cohort of staff focus on ensuring that the jobs they work on are done right and to the best standard they can be.

5. Care and passionate about getting things done right and well

- The key theme when work is undertaken is that things are done right and well and this is achieved via a care and passion from the staff about the job - small things are focused upon i.e. door handles.

A highly professional HR team have helped to create this culture and practice and have been highly influential.