

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

FOR

BRIGGS AMASCO LIMITED

Key Information

Assessment Type	3 Year Assessment
Investors in People Practitioner	Richard Tomes
Visit Date	22 nd – 26 th August 2016
Assessment Enquiry Number	ENQ-101651-2YSWWF

Conclusion

It was a pleasure to spend some time with the people of Briggs Amasco and hear from them about the history of the organisation and their experiences in working for it. It is clearly an organisation that provides a high quality service for its customers and prides itself on the competence of its staff.

Having spoken to a wide variety of people from across the organisation I am pleased to conclude that the requirements of the Standard continue to be met and that a further 3 year period of accreditation should be awarded.

Many congratulations on this achievement.

Milestone Dates

Review of Continuous Improvement Plan	February 2018
Date of Next Full Assessment	August 2019



Richard Tomes
Investors in People Practitioner

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Introduction

Briggs Amasco prides itself on being one of the longest established roofing businesses in the country and one that is able to offer a nationwide service to its customers. Recognised for a high standard of customers service and meeting client expectations they enjoy good levels of repeat business as well as winning new contracts.

Investors in people accreditation has been maintained for a number of years that helps ensure the people are of the highest order and sends a message out to customers that says “we do a quality job with quality people.” The last assessment took the organisation out of a period of retaining recognition and they have sought over the intervening 3 years to build on the good practice that had been established.

This assessment has been conducted by an assessor new to the organisation.

Strengths of the Organisation

- Attention to detail in the planning process results in there being very clear goals for teams and individuals.
- People are very clear about what is expected of them and know how what they do can make a contribution to the organisation
- Performance review processes ensure that the success of the business is kept under regular scrutiny and any remedial action needed can be quickly instigated.
- Senior management is seen as fair, effective and inspire confidence for the long term success of the business.
- The introduction of an NVQ for managers is a very positive initiative that can be seen to be having an impact.
- Those that want to progress receive the help and support needed to help them achieve their aspirations.
- The wide variety of opportunities for people to learn has resulted in a highly competent workforce capable of delivering the organisations objectives.
- Staff are competent of delivering a quality service without the need to be micro managed.
- There is a very good induction that helps new people settle in quickly and assimilate their new role.
- People's views matter and they are listened to.
- People are motivated to doing a quality job
- People like what they do, believe they work for a very good company and feel appreciated for what they do.

Feedback Against the Requirements of the Standard

Appraisals and Learning and Development

The established process is that there should be a 12 month appraisal for all with a 6 month more informal review. Whilst a few comment that these are of limited value the majority welcome the opportunity to discuss to review performance and consider future learning needs. Where relevant to the role these are also occasions when current objectives are reviewed and future ones established.

Those new to the organisation comment on the effectiveness of the induction process; *"it's the best I've ever had."* The 2 days that everyone spends at Head Office is considered helpful and a way of understanding the size and complexity of the organisation they have come to work for. For those that are more office based they have the opportunity to visit projects and see what the work done entails and they describe this as an *"invaluable part of the formative learning process."*

Most are able to confirm a 6 month probationary period at the end of which there is discussion regarding performance and any emergent needs that may need addressing. People also said that during early days managers would often ask; *"how are you getting on"* as an informal way of ascertaining if people were settling down OK. There are also shadowing opportunities for people during this period that help people understand better the demands of their new role.

There is an annual learning plan that is a summation of individual needs, branch needs, and that which is considered beneficial to support the performance of branches and the organisation as a whole.

What is delivered to people is wide and varied and includes those essential skills in which people need maintain their competence, covering, for example health and safety as well as that which is more of a developmental nature. There is a good discipline around ensuring that people gain and maintain approvals and accreditations necessary for the work they do. As well as Head Office training days that are arranged for time to time, within branches people will often attend supplier training events that help keep them abreast of product development. As one person commented; *"I've never been with a company that does so much training."*

As mentioned there is formal discussion regarding developmental needs at appraisal, but people confirm that in reality this can be raised at any time. Training request forms are sent out every month so that Branch Managers can make people aware of what is available and nominate delegates. *"You can always ask for help and further development and if it relates to your job it will often be supported."*

Where considered helpful and appropriate people are able to undertake more formal training leading towards qualification. As an example a number of managers are pursuing NVQ 6/7 in construction management at present and this may be made available more widely.

As is often the case a significant amount of learning comes from people sharing knowledge and experience with each other and whilst this may be part of a formal arrangement, as in the case of new starters this also occurs naturally in the course of conversation as discussion.

Communication and Consultation

Communication is a mix of the formal and informal with to extent person being told what they need to know rather than telling people everything that is taking place. Certainly at a branch level people in most cases profess to know all that they need about the performance of their part of the business and what may be in store for the future. Most people talk about an open and transparent

Branch performance is regularly reviewed through the monthly reports quarterly meetings and annual reviews. In most cases people are informed of progress being made and have the opportunity to comment and contribute. There were a few people who profess to being told very little of what is taking place and this and other findings point to some managers not being as effective as others.

There are periodic Health and Safety meetings (this being a matter that is considered of high importance) and generally attendance at these is required which provides the opportunity to share messages and information with people and on occasion's council their opinion.

Every effort goes into being at the 'cutting edge' or roofing practice by keeping abreast of new materials and techniques. People have the opportunity to attend supplier events, conferences and events etc. in support of their continuing learning. People also ensure that they share what they have learned with others.

Team work is much in evidence as is playing to the respective strengths of individuals. Within branches there is spirit that shows that people are unified towards achieving common goals and an eagerness to support colleagues. Roofing teams who often are trusted to 'get on with the job,' without close management clearly work together and support each other to ensure timely completion of work to designated quality standards. It is clear also that managers will 'lend a hand' at times to ensure targets are met.

A majority of people say that they have the opportunity to talk about branch performance issues and are able to put forward their opinion and have this listened to. Toolbox talks provide the opportunity for those 'on the tools' to hear something of what is taking place, receive customer feedback and at times make a contribution. *"They always listen to us and you feel that our opinions matter to them."*

Linked to the appraisal process is a staff questionnaire that seeks the opinion of people across a range of issues, including the effectiveness of managers. Senior staff say that they find what people have to say helpful in informing future decisions about how the business is run. Conventional wisdom regarding staff questionnaires is that there is benefit in sharing the collated results with people and perhaps issuing a 'you said, we did' so that people know that what they say is taken seriously.

Engagement Strategies

As previously mentioned there is a strong team spirit throughout the company and people show a level of enthusiasm and commitment to meet their objectives and those of the team/branch. They also describe having a degree of autonomy and not being micro managed that has an impact on people wanting to do a good job. As one person said; *"I can decide if I want to quote for a job or not based on my knowledge of how worthwhile it might be."*

There is a bonus system in place that for most people relates to the performance of the branch which means that some may receive a bonus in a given year and others will not. Nonetheless people feel the bonus system is a fair one and give reasonable reward for collective achievement. For those 'on the tools' there is the opportunity to earn more based on production (Output Measurement Scheme). This people say provides an incentive to (weather permitting) to do more to the benefit of themselves and the company.

There are rewards for going over and above and exceeding expectations. One person was able to describe receiving a £50.00 voucher as a result of the contribution he had made. This manager confirmed was regular practice where they look to acknowledge the additional effort that some people put in

Most people say that they are made to feel appreciated for their contribution and that managers will frequently say well done and thank people for their efforts. For the most part they feel genuinely appreciated for what they do and say that Briggs is a good company to work for. *"It's 100% better than any other company I've worked for."*

Everyone says they feel able to make a difference and that they can put ideas forward and make changes that result in improvements. People say that they are trusted to get on with the job, but also feel respected for the contribution they are able to make and that they are encouraged to get involved. As one person put it; *"I wouldn't work for any other company in the industry."* Someone else said; *"they are really open to ideas from people."*

People feel that their talents are recognised and if they are able to make a contribution beyond the confines of their job that is encouraged. Some respondents described how they were able to take the lead on new initiatives and could become the 'expert' for the team or even the company as a whole.

There are numerous examples of people being able to progress in the company and most people in senior roles are there because of promotion rather than having been recruited externally. It is seen as possible to have a 'career' with the organisation and that so long as you 'put yourself forward' opportunities will become available.

Many observed that a major factor in staying with the company is because it is seen as the market leader and a very secure organisation to work for. This is borne out by the large number of long service people working for the company. They also feel regarded as people with a positive response made to personal issues they may have. *"The company are brilliant when people have personal difficulties."*

There were a large number of positive comments from people about the company, which included *"I really enjoy the job."*
"They do health checks for people. I've never had that before."
"I couldn't pick fault with the company, even the MD would help you out if you had a problem."
"I wouldn't be as happy anywhere else."

Performance Management

In a company where delivering on price and on time is paramount it is to be expected that a close eye is kept on progress and performance branch by branch. As stated earlier targets are determined for each branch annually based on turnover and net profit and this is the started point for performance monitoring. It is for branch managers to drive their part of the business forward and look to secure contracts that will enable the performance figures to be met. It can be seen that they work closely with their teams to see that business is being secured and jobs are progressing as planned.

Monthly figures are produced for Head Office and quarterly reviews of performance are conducted as well as the annual review. Operations managers maintain regular and close contact with branch managers to any issues are identified and solutions put in place. There is in effect a real time approach to performance management and rather than storing issues up for the formal reviews they are dealt with on a daily basis.

Contracts managers can be seen to be maintaining hands on control of work in progress spending most of their time on site to ensure that jobs are progressing to schedule, any issues are being addressed and most importantly customers are happy. They have regular contact with the 'work gangs' and report back to branch managers on progress being made.

Whilst there is variability of the levels of profitability of branches this down to the amount of work being secured and not performance issues with work being undertaken. There is for example greater competition in some parts of the country than others.

Appraisals are time when managers discuss and agree individual objectives and these are undertaken every 12 months with a lighter touch review at 6 months. Managers have informal 'chats' with staff on a regular basis and this is at least monthly so that appraisals are a summation of what has been discussed during the year and not a first look at an individual's performance.

For those whose performance is more business critical, Business Development Managers for example there are more regular formal reviews of team and individual performance. They describe meetings at which performance and strategies are discussed and that ideas and innovations can be considered.

Health and Safety is a major concern for the organisation and they pride themselves on having an excellent record in this area. A comment from one person was; "*we're the market leader for health and safety.*"

Core Values

Whilst the core values that were relaunched at the time of the last assessment are less apparent than they appeared to be then they nevertheless can be seen to be at the heart of the approach taken to delivering the business and managing its people. Health and Safety remains a key priority and actions to protect the environment are increasingly important.

People are proud of the company and recognise its prominence in the market as a company that delivers a quality product and has a longevity that is the envy of many of its competitors. The significant levels of repeat business that the company enjoys goes a long way to suggest that the company is very good at what it does and sets standards that others may aspire to follow. This would imply that whilst core values may be less explicit than previously they are embedded in the culture and practice.

Having a regard for people is also a priority and there is evidence of a flexible approach being taken to meet the needs of people with caring responsibilities for example. People are able to work from home and there is a positive response to helping people deal with conflicting priorities.

Leadership

People are very positive about the qualities of senior managers in the organisation and comment on their approachability and availability when needed. "*The MD is very approachable and other managers will help you out when needed.*"

There has been a more critical look at management effectiveness of late recognising that branch managers in particular are vital to the success of the business. To this end in the South an NVQ 7 in Construction Management is being made available to people on a trial basis. Comprising 9 one day sessions for delegates as well as compiling evidence of competence it aims to raise the effectiveness of managers in the business. Those that have been or are on the programme say they are finding it interesting and useful and it would appear that it making a difference.

There are a few managers who it would seem are less effective than others and action is needed to identify these and address the issues at hand. This was evidenced through some saying that appraisal was of limited benefit and that little was done to acknowledge the contribution of people i.e. saying thank you and well done.

There is an annual branch manager's conference that people enjoy and find useful. It is an occasion when people can learn about how other in the business operate and share practice with each other. Generally the view is that branch managers are becoming more effective but there are still some improvements to be made.

Mention has already been made of career opportunities for people and senior managers confirm that a degree of succession planning takes place with those with potential being identified and being given the opportunity to gain additional knowledge and skills that will prepare them for future roles.

A comment from one person perhaps sums up the view that is held of most managers in the organisation. *"It was a good move to come here. They are a good company to work for. Managers listen to people and are accessible and approachable and most of all you are not micro managed."*

Appendix 1 – Continuous Improvement Plan

Business Issue - What	Suggested Actions - How	Potential Benefit - Why	Priority - When	Solutions/Support Available - Who
Communication	Share the collated results of the staff survey with people and issue a 'you said, we did.'	This will show people that you think their views matter and the action you have taken on issues raised.	Medium	
Leadership and Management	As you continue to role out the management NVQ evolve a set of leadership competences.	These will be useful enable you to judge the effectiveness of managers in an objective manner. They can also be used to inform future development.	Medium	
	Adopt a coaching style of management	This will help devolve levels of responsibility and stop those managers who want to do everything themselves	Medium	

Commercial in Confidence

Appendix 2 – Assessment results summary

The Investors in People Framework

The Evidence Requirements

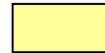
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The Indicators	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																						
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	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																							
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	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																							
	10	✓	✓	✓																									

The number of evidence requirements met is 39

Key:



The Core Investors in People Standard



Your Choice from the Investors in People Framework



Not part of the Investors in People Framework