

CASE STUDY



K-SPACE NI LTD, PORTADOWN

"We achieved Investors in People recognition in October 2008 but the real reward has been the impact that Investors in People has had on our people, their performances and the ability to tackle future challenges."

Bernadette Bradshaw, Director

Mule®

BACKGROUND

Size: 7 employees

Sector: Manufacturing

Location: Based in Portadown, the company operates across all sectors throughout Ireland and the UK

Status: First achieved Investors in People recognition in October 2008

THE ORGANISATION

Mule® is the trading style of K-Space (NI) Ltd, a general engineering firm who design and manufacture secure site accommodation.

Its products range from single toilet units to sleeping accommodation and have potential application for almost any project where the security of goods and accommodation is paramount. K-Space's units are employed by leading construction companies, public authorities, retail giants, hire stores, event companies, armed forces, airports, sports and leisure/community groups, as well as domestically.



K-Space NI Ltd Directors: Kevin and Bernadette Bradshaw

- **Clear Business Plan**
- **Strong Performance Management**
- **Improved Communication**

THE CHALLENGE

Within a considerably short period, K-Space has grown significantly under the dynamic management of its two directors and a highly competent workforce.

As its workforce grew, K-Space's two directors soon realised that the business was lacking real structure. Company Director, Bernadette Bradshaw, explains: "We needed an opportunity to take stock and reinforce the foundation upon which the business had been built on so rapidly to date. A real business plan was required – one that worked for us; where we could look at where we were currently, where we were going and what we needed to do to get there."

Fellow Director, Kevin Bradshaw, adds: "The Investors in People Standard was introduced to us as one of the most recognised and respected marks of good practice in the UK.

K-Space recognised that it would be easier to introduce good working practices sooner rather than later. However this required time and effort – something which is very precious in any business.

THE STRATEGY

K-Space's goal is to maximise profitability and grow its business and market share. Bernadette explains: "After all, if we are not growing, not moving forward, then we are going backwards – staying still is not an option. Growth through innovation comes down, ultimately, to the performance of our people. "

K-Space recognised the importance of a competent and motivated workforce and saw real opportunity in implementing the principles and practices of the Investors in People framework. The business made a firm commitment to working with Investors in People in November 2007 through a group scheme that was part-sponsored by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and Craigavon Borough Council.

THE RESULTS

K-Space achieved Investors in People recognition in October 2008 but the real reward has been the impact that Investors in People has had on K-Space's people, their performances and the ability to tackle future challenges.

Continuous improvement of the organisation is clearly highlighted within the sales and marketing strategy, which includes targeting new market segments, building brand awareness, being loyal to the customers and producing high quality products. Kevin explains: "Our attack on cost, quality and time has become relentless."

K-Space has many examples of good people management and development practices - its business plan clearly defines the organisation's purpose and vision and the strategy for improving performance; all members of staff have clearly defined objectives which link to the organisations objectives; and all members of staff have a very clear understanding of their role and how they can contribute to the success of the organisation.

Bernadette adds: "We are very much aware that new ideas coming up stream and indeed the products and services that our customer has come to expect will only derive from teamwork and involvement of all staff. Management are inclusive and in facilitating such bottom-up leadership, we are aware that this keeps everyone on the same page when it comes to the business's long-term goals."

Employing the principles of IiP has allowed the management at K-Space to seize the opportunity to set the tone for the entire company – playing others to their strengths. Kevin describes how there is now much better planning in the business: "Training is focused and performance management is stronger. Communication among the entire workforce is excellent and we are grateful to Craigavon Borough Council and DEL for their support."

Bernadette concludes: "2008 has been a great year for us and we do largely attribute this to the Investors in People Standard. Our most notable recent achievements have been:

- Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2008
- Best New Business Finalist 2008
- Favourable customer acquisitions
- Investor in People recognition 2008
- Constructionline accreditation 2008

And the way forward? We accept that 2009/10 will be hard for many SMEs. However, our strategy is to maintain our attack on COSTS, QUALITY, TIME; embrace the changes with which we are now faced; and adhere to and strive to exceed IiP principles and guidelines."

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