

**Commercial in Confidence**



**Investors in People  
Part Profile Review Report (Indicators 1 & 6)**

**For**

**The Cutting Corner**

**On behalf of**



**Assessor:** Elizabeth Morris

**On Site Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2007

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## **1. Executive Summary**

The key findings of the assessment indicated that The Cutting Corner meets the evidence requirements of the current version of the National Investors in People Standard. The below summary represents the assessment findings within context of identified strengths and suggestions for further development:

### **Key Strengths**

- Exceptionally strong mission, core values and 'Signposts' developed, shared and communicated throughout the company.
- Drive and encouragement to strive for excellence.
- All the team are aware of the company short and long term objectives with innovative individual 'Wildly Important Goals' (WIGS).
- Outstanding learning and development opportunities for new and existing team members. All staff interviewed were able to provide examples of development activity, effectively tracked and documented.
- Excellent Reward & Recognition Schemes resulting in high levels of morale.
- Structured development and career progression, from Assistant to Senior Hairdesigner.
- Additional responsibilities for longer serving members of staff providing job enrichment opportunities and empowerment.
- Encouragement to visit high performing organisations.
- The Client Forums held to obtain stakeholder feedback and assist in the future development of the business and long term strategy.
- Strong recruitment and selection policies including an effective Work Experience programme through Bedfordshire Education Business Partnership.
- A culture of support and encouragement amongst all the team members and the team spirit observed three years ago is still firmly in place.
- Equality of opportunity is embedded and forms part of the Salon philosophies, resulting in high levels of morale and motivation
- Social Responsibility and links with the local community are very good, with partnership schemes currently under development.

**Suggested Development Areas**

The suggestions below are listed in accordance with the IIP Standard indicators and not in any order of priority. It will be for the company to determine how it addresses these suggestions and in what order.

- Although the Salon has strong links with the community through local Schools programmes they are beginning to look seriously at Social Responsibility at Top Manager level. The Salon is in the process of establishing links still further with external organisations, such as Luton Housing Association and this is highly commendable. However, in order for the company to develop effectively in this area, the team need to have a clear understanding of the Salon's social responsibilities and what this means to the way they are expected to work. This could be achieved through a Team day and use this opportunity to brainstorm and produce a strategy for Social Responsibility.
- Succession Planning is now key to the long term growth and expansion of the company and the Salon needs to build on progress to date, you may wish to consider how you encourage staff to develop leadership capabilities and build their confidence in this area.
- In conjunction with the above consider ways that feedback from all levels within the Salon is gained, to help improve the way that more senior staff lead and manage specific project areas e.g. Product Management.
- Continue to embed coaching across the Salon, as more experienced members of the team continue to work with younger staff. Ultimately, this will help them think through issues for themselves rather than telling or instructing them and assist in developing leadership skills. Coaching is a real skill and may require additional training.
- The Salon has performed superbly in the area of Reward and Recognition; this area could be improved still further by looking at schemes that enable staff to gain additional holiday entitlement e.g. Team Member of the Month is awarded with 1 extra day's holiday. This will strengthen the company's position in ensuring the company has a forward thinking benefits strategy with policies that go beyond legal requirements.
- The Team briefings have enormous potential as a management and communication tool. They may serve to support the development of leaders and potential managers in terms of guidance of how to communicate key messages and priorities. You may like to consider team member running these briefings (with guidance) again to assist in management development.
- As the first Hairdressing Salon to be assessed against Profile and perform so well, it is hoped that the Salon will work in partnership

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with The Assessment Network to produce a Case Study that can be circulated and used as an additional marketing tool for both parties.

- The Cutting Corner has constantly performed extremely well against the Investors in People Standard and would make an excellent Champion. However, the assessor recognises the commitment that would be required by the Salon owner and understands his reservations. However, this status would provide the Salon with an additional opportunity to externally benchmark their performance in all areas of the Standard.
- The Salon Business Plan could be improved still further by being more specific around financial improvements and this will make it a more effective evaluation tool e.g. a 10% increase in technical work.

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**2. Introduction**

The Cutting Corner was founded in 1966 as Cresta Hair Salon and renamed The Cutting Corner in 1985. They are situated on the first floor of Cresta House in Luton Town Centre. The objective of the company has always been to provide a higher quality service than was available locally and the target market is at the top end of the female and male population aged between 18-50 from Luton and the surrounding area.

The Cutting Corner was first recognised as an Investor in People in 2001 and since this time the business has experienced substantial change. The business now has a sole owner and operates as a unisex salon. A major refurbishment project took place 4 years ago and the salon has an impressive funky image.

In the short term the focus is to develop the ladies side of the business, by expanding the number of clients and client spend on treatments and colours. Longer term, the company would like to expand the number of units to 4 and open an academy to continually train and develop staff, in addition to providing this service outside the company.

At present the Salon has a flat organisation structure consisting of the Salon Manager (owner) and Senior Hairdesigners, Hairdesigners and assistants at various levels of development.

The client experience is still paramount to the success of the company and is at the very heart of the organisation, with the teams promise of '*To create the ultimate Hairdressing experience...and then better it!*'

### **3. Assessment and Client Objectives**

The assessment and client objectives were agreed as follows:-

- To ensure that The Cutting Corner continues to meet the Investors in People Standard.
- To determine how well the company performs against Indicators 1 and 6 of Profile and to specify the levels achieved.
- To gather relevant and specific feedback relating to strengths and areas for development and provide examples of best practice.

#### **3.1 The Assessment Plan**

An initial meeting took place on July 10th 2007 to discuss the scope of the assessment and undertaking a part Profile Review. There was a comprehensive and detailed discussion around Indicators 1 and 6 and it was agreed that the Salon would be assessed against these indicators.

An on-site day of August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 was confirmed and it was agreed that evidence would be collected through one to one interviews and a review of relevant documentation (see below)

- Business Plan
- Press Articles
- Wildly Important Goals (WIGS)
- Staff List
- Signposts
- Website
- Training Plans
- Induction Quiz

#### **3.2 Interview Sample**

A total of 10 staff were interviewed, this sample included all levels and represented approximately 62% of staff. Interviews included full and part time staff and where possible a balance of female/male staff with an employment history ranging from 16 years to 5 weeks. The planning meeting also included an observation of the Salon manager seeking feedback from a regular client and discussing the product that had been used on their hair.

In addition to the staff interviewed on site, during the assessment an opportunity arose to speak to an employee of Luton Housing Association, who is beginning a partnership with The Cutting Corner to enhance the lives of their clients and provide the Salon with additional models.

**4. Assessment Findings**

***Principle 1 – Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation***

<b>1. A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood</b>											<b>Level achieved</b>			
											<b>2</b>			
<b>Level 1</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>									

There is a very strong vision and mission statement, known as the Teams Promise, 'To create the ultimate hairdressing experience.....and then improve it'. This is supported by a set of Philosophies and Signposts that have been developed by team members during training days and are revisited regularly to ensure that they still meet the needs of the Salon.

There is a written business plan and there is an annual review of the plan against objectives. During Team Days progress is reviewed and since the last Investors in People Assessment the Manager has increased the level of financial information he shares with team members.

Whilst there are no representative groups, the Salon now has an appointed Team Spokesperson and determined efforts are made to involve and consult with staff in formulating the Business Plan.

All team members interviewed were very clear on the aims of the Salon and a recurrent theme was evident the drive to achieve 'excellence'. All team members were familiar with Signposts and explained how these had been revisited and updated during a Team Day. The introduction of a Team Spokesperson has also been received positively.

<b>Level 2/3</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>			
<b>Level 4</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>								

There are seven core values that have been established, known throughout the Salon, as 'Signposts' and these have been developed in Project Number: 07/0765

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consultation with all the team. They underpin the Salon's drive to move forward and strive for excellence.

All team members have a set of Wildy Important Goals (WIGS) that are revisited at performance reviews and sales targets are now displayed in the staff room so that all the team are aware of individual and overall business performance.

Although there is not as yet a specific Social Responsibility strategy, it is very much at the forefront of the Salon Managers mind. As a result there are a number of excellent initiatives under development including a pilot scheme with Luton Housing Association. The scheme is to assist in the rehabilitation of their clients, providing the Salon with models to assist in the development of team members.

The Salon is also looking at introducing a new partnership with 'Locks of Love' an American Charity, which provides hairpieces for children with conditions like alopecia and long term medical hair loss. Although this initiative is only at the development phase, the Salon has already received good publicity and is looking to drive this programme forward.

### **2. Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives**

The Salon's learning and development strategy is linked to its aims and objectives. In terms of building capability to achieve its vision the manager explained the key learning and development themes for the year, centring around developing leadership skills and delegating specific responsibilities to individuals to strengthen the team.

All team members were able to describe how they were involved in identifying their learning and development needs:-

- Performance Reviews
- College/NVQ Performance Reviews
- During induction
- Model evenings
- On a day-to-day basis

Staff explained that the performance and development reviews provided an ideal opportunity to discuss learning and discussions about development activity also tends to take place informally. As a result of being consulted, staff were always clear on what the purpose and impact of development should be. Examples included:-

- Nanomax training to enable The Cutting Corner to become a specialist centre.

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- INSPIRE training – specialist colour training again to become a specialist centre.
- Customer Care training – to enhance the customer experience

**3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people**

There are a variety of ways in which team members are encouraged to put forward ideas to improve performance. These included a Saturday morning team briefings, Team Days, Client Forums and performance reviews. However, all staff interviewed felt that they could contribute ideas on an ad hoc basis and they were always received favourably.

The Salon Manager is very keen to provide a learning environment where team members are encouraged to develop to their full potential and provide innovative approaches. To facilitate this he has ensured that development opportunities are available for all.

A range of learning and development opportunities are supported, such as external training, day release to Barnfield College, visits to Wella Studios, Model evenings, observation, coaching, presentations and demonstrations.

All team members interviewed felt very strongly that the Salon was committed to their development and that there was equality of opportunity to access learning and development activities. For many the Salon's reputation and outstanding level of training was what had initially attracted them to the company.

Staff also spoke positively about the introduction of Saturday morning team briefings and Team Spokesperson and explained that these teamed with reviews and Team days provided ample opportunity to make suggestions and put forward ideas.

**4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood**

The Salon Manager is very clear about the knowledge, skills and behaviours he needs to lead and manage people effectively. Examples of skills and knowledge included good interpersonal skills, leading by example, creating an environment of ownership and empowerment, encouraging ideas and sharing expertise. Good communication skills were also highlighted as essential in order to maintain the smooth running of the Salon. The Salon has a set of clearly defined competencies required for each role and this includes Managers. Where leadership skills are being developed with individuals, relevant development activity is planned and sourced.

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Team members spoke very warmly about the Manager and more senior members of staff in the Salon and were clear about what they should be doing to support them. They described an open and inclusive culture where leaders are supportive; provide guidance, technical advice and share knowledge and information. They gave a consistent view of what they managers should be doing to lead, manage and develop them:-

- Communicative
- Approachable
- Knowledgeable
- Fair
- Motivational
- Supportive
- Respectful
- Expert in their area

***Principle 2 – Taking Action to improve the performance of the organisation***

**5. Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people**

It was clear from discussions with the Manager that he considers the development and support of team members as a key priority to the success of the business. The Manager described the mechanisms in place to provide constructive feedback to team members and these included probationary reviews, annual reviews, observation, on-going workplace feedback, team briefings, and team days. Exit interviews are also carried out to identify any areas needing improvement in procedures.

Team members described how the manager and more senior members of staff are effective in managing, leading and developing them. All staff described them as being approachable and supportive providing guidance and technical advice. This makes it easy for them to communicate and resolve issues quickly. People explained that senior members adopt an informal coaching role and take learning and development very seriously.

The team described receiving constructive feedback at their reviews as well as at other appropriate times. Reviews are well embedded and the process has recently been updated to reflect the changing needs of the Salon.

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<b>6. People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued</b>										<b>Level achieved</b>				
										<b>4</b>				
<b>Level 1</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>												

The Salon Manager considers reward and recognition aspect of how he manages the team and how he carries out his management responsibilities with the business. A considerable amount of time has been spent looking at other salons within the Luton area and what these establishments can offer their staff. During performance reviews staff are thanked personally for their contribution. The Salon also has awards for 'Team Member of the month' and 'Assistant of the Year' and 'Hairdesigner of the Year'.

Team members confirmed that their contribution to the Salon is without doubt recognised and discussed the various awards with pride, giving examples of the prizes they have received, including scissors, visits to Wella Studios, Gift Vouchers. Staff explained that the prizes were different depending on the individual's likes, dislikes and stage in their development.

Team members were able to describe how they contribute to the Salons performance. They offered the following examples:-

- Progressing from 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Assistant to Graduate Hairdesigner and be able to generate more income
- Managing client appointments to fulfil capacity
- Promoting Hair Care products to increase retail sales

<b>Level 2/3</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>					
<b>Level 4</b>														
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>									

As mentioned previously the Salon Manager has seriously considered how he rewards and recognises staff for their contributions to the business. Externally related factors have been taken into account to ensure the

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Salons rewards go beyond legal requirements. As a result the Salon is an employer of choice, with several team members explaining how they had wanted to work at the Salon for many years and had to wait for the right opportunity. Other team members explained how they had left the Salon to work at another Salon, only to return at the first available opening.

Due to the superb development opportunities and highly motivated staff the Salon has become a premier account holder for Wella, offering two of their latest products, Nanomax and INSPIRE.

Although no representative groups exist within the Salon, the Manager explained, that Team Days are the main opportunity for team members to discuss the reward and recognition schemes in place. Team members saw the commission structure and awards available as a fair means of apportioning profit and were able to clearly make the link between the strategy and their own performance. They described how they are involved in developing the Salons reward and recognition strategy through team days and team briefings and explained how when the commission structure was amended recently they were consulted with and their feedback was sort.

Team members spoke proudly of how they and their colleagues had either achieved Team Member of the month or Hairdesigner of the Year. Indeed staff spirits were high as the night prior to the assessment the team celebrated one members of staff promotion to Graduate Hair Designer. They explained earlier in the Year how all the team had been taken to the Rocky Horror Show, where this member of staff was told she was going to be promoted and presented with her own business cards.

Team member success is always celebrated by the Salon and in most cases Presentation evenings include family and close friends. In addition, wherever possible, as staff progress along their career path the Manager publicly acknowledges this via the local press, trade journals and on the company website.

Nearly all the team members interviewed at one time or another has achieved Team Member of the month and are delighted to have achieved this status.

### **7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making**

During the assessment there was an overwhelming and consistent view that team members are included and involved in decision-making. The Salon Manager has striven to ensure that consultation methods are in place and actively encourages participation throughout the company. This included:-

- Team discussions in the workplace

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- Saturday morning team meetings
- Quarterly Team Days
- Staff Performance Reviews
- Client Forum evenings

The Salon manager also spoke of how he is now more than ever allowing staff to take responsibility for their decisions and use their own initiative. Examples included: encouragement to take on additional responsibilities such as Product Manager and co-ordinating Client Forums.

Team members described how their views are sought and felt that their comments and suggestions are not only encouraged but listened to and where appropriate actions are taken. Staff explained how weekly quick fix meetings enabled them to address any concerns quickly and effectively and how Team Days gave them quality time to think and work constructively as a team to drive the business forward. Team members spoke of the introduction of a Team Spoke Person and felt that this approach worked well.

Staff also spoke of how they are encouraged to take responsibility for decisions and work on their own initiative, including specific projects such as the production of a 2007 Calendar and the role of 'Team Buddy'.

### **8. People learn and develop effectively**

The Salon Manager is constantly aware of the progress of staff and ensures that their development takes place via performance review, training matrices, providing appropriate work-based experience, technical courses at Wella Studios and training partnerships with Barnfield College.

Team members gave a variety of examples of how their learning and development needs had been met:-

- Model Training Evenings
- NVQ Levels 2 & 3 in Hairdressing
- Presentation Evenings
- Development Projects e.g. 2007 Hair Design Calendar
- Technical Courses at Wella Studios
- 1:1 Coaching and mentoring
- Product awareness and understanding
- Customer Care
- Visits to Trade Shows e.g. Salon International

Team members new the Salon explained that their induction had been effective and that prior to their start date had worked at the Salon on a trial basis. They explained that they continue to receive support and get regular feedback. During induction staff spoke of how the 'Signposts' and 'Philosophies' of the Salon are explained and they are required to complete a comprehensive Induction Quiz.

As team member's progress within the Salon from 1<sup>st</sup> Year Assistant to Senior Hairdesigner they take part in weekly training nights and learn everything from consultation skills to treatments and colouring. As they continue to develop they undergo regular progress reviews and towards the end of their training they go onto 'Countdown' to graduation before moving onto Graduate Hairdesigner. There is no doubt that staff at the Salon receive continuous support and learn and develop effectively.

### ***Principle 3 – Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation***

#### **9. Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation**

There is considerable investment of time, money and resources to support the development of all team members, including day release, model nights and additional training course. The Manager is wholly committed to developing the team to meet the needs of the company, objectives and priorities.

Because of the Managers high level of involvement in the business, he is closely placed to all the team and can see the impact of all learning and development activity and indeed identify additional learning needs. Examples were given of how development had improved performance at team and organisational level in terms of growth and client feedback. This included an increase in client re-requests, premier supplier status of Nanomax molecular hair repair beating high profile names such as Daniel Galvin and Nicki Clarke.

The Manager spoke of using the evaluation of learning and development activity to develop his strategy for improving the performance of the Salon. He described the need to develop staff to achieve the Salon's objectives, by expanding the number of clients and the percentage of client spend. There is commitment in the Business Plan to improving the approach to staff development still further and the introduction of 'Wildly Important goals' focuses individuals to help their team achieve the same results.

There is a very strong learning and development culture firmly embedded within the Salon and all those team members interviewed were able to provide examples of formal and informal activity improving performance, an example of which was a member of the team receiving 1:1 coaching on sales techniques to increase their confidence in promoting hair care products and ultimately increasing income generation.

**10. Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed**

The manager discussed how evaluation of the investment in staff has resulted in improvements in the Salons strategy for managing and developing team members, including the introduction of Exit Interviews to assess staff turnover, and the development of Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) for individual team members. In addition the Salon manager now shares detailed financial information with team members to enhance their understanding of organisational performance.

Team members discussed that the culture of sharing knowledge and techniques, had created an environment where continuous improvement is considered normal practice. As at previous assessments team members confirmed that the learning and development they participated in is generally of a high standard and has needed little improvement. However, all team members interviewed explained how feedback on development activity is always sort and ineffective training is investigated further and discussed with the provider.

Team members were able to give examples of a number of improvements to the way in which The Cutting Corner manages and develops them:-

- Improved review process and reduced documentation.
- Revisited and updated 'Signposts' the core values developed by all the team.
- Specific training projects to enhance all skills e.g. the production of The Cutting Corner 2007 calendar.
- Wella – INSPIRE colour treatment training programme improved when skill gaps were identified.
- Introduction of Saturday morning 10 minute meetings at the suggestion of clients.

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**5. Conclusion**

Having conducted the assessment in accordance with Investors in People UK and The Assessment Network's guidelines, I am pleased to confirm The Cutting Corner continues to meet the Investors in People National Standard.

May I also extend my thanks to all those who took part in the assessment process and their honest comments in respect of their experience within The Cutting Corner, in addition to the hospitality and welcome I received.

**6. Next Review**

Recognition as an Investor in People is subject to reviews against the Investors in People Standard every three years. Therefore The Cutting Corner will be required to be assessed no later than 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010. For guidance in respect of future Investors in People review options please refer to your local regional Investor in People Centre 01480 479222.

**7. Quality Assurance**

The Assessment Network Ltd is responsible for the Quality Assurance of this assessment and will invite a representative from The Cutting Corner to take part in a Quality Assurance Questionnaire. This questionnaire was devised and developed by Investors in People UK, with the objective of receiving client feedback in order to provide a consistent approach to the assessment and recognition process. Further details will be forwarded by The Assessment Network Ltd in due course.

**8. Summary of Profile Levels**

<b>Investors in People Profile Indicator</b>	<b>Level Achieved</b>
1. A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.	<b>2</b>
6. People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.	<b>4</b>



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