



SFEDI CASE STUDY

Name: Paul Thompson
Occupation: Business Advisor
Organisation: London Rebuilding Society



Introduction

Paul is an experienced Business Advisor with his own property development company and also as an associate with the London Rebuilding Society (LRS) which helps individuals set up or develop new business enterprises. His original career path was in the ICT sector which was followed by a period with BT's marketing department producing plans with clear, well researched objectives alongside fully accountable supporting documentation. He currently has a base of some 20 clients situated in the London Boroughs of Greenwich, Hackney, Barking, Dagenham, Lewisham and Newham.

Why SFEDI accreditation?

Paul was advised to attain SFEDI accreditation by a number of Government agencies that generate leads for him. He also personally felt that it was 'the best way forward' as it would increase his competitiveness. On applying, he was appointed an assessor who was continuously on hand to guide him through the process.

The Process

Although experienced in business Paul found the four month process engaging. It became apparent during the knowledge and self assessment check list that there was a need to think more laterally and 'outside the box' when confronting issues within a range of businesses. This complimented the work on finding the best way to understand clients as people and approach their concerns from different angles. One of the key lessons Paul learnt was that to get to the bottom of some issues you need to know the client as much as a person and as well as you know the business itself. Quite deliberately, the process stretches the applicant in a number of ways and makes them look at the bigger picture.

The nominated assessor played a key role as he joined Paul at a client visit on at least three occasions with three different clients and witnessed at first hand the manner in which the meetings are held. This enabled the assessor to give the appropriate in depth feedback on each occasion and highlight strengths as well as areas to develop. Paul enjoyed the fact that the process was relatively paper free and depends largely on interacting with your assessor and taking on board his/her advice. The final results of the assessment show clear directions of how best to move forward.

Reflections

Paul comments:

'It was most certainly worthwhile and has given me added credibility in the marketplace with a clear sense of direction. It would be terrific if the SFEDI standard could be promoted to a larger audience rather than be led by Government agencies as all sectors will benefit from it.'

About SFEDI

SFEDI is the standards setting body for the business support sector responsible for researching and disseminating what works best for small business advisers and the endorsement of business development products and programmes. For more information please contact **Mike Bate on 07957 166253** or by email: mike.bate@cqlgroup.co.uk