

case study



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Natural History Museum



- **Attendance and participation in training days increased by 65%**
- **Number of delegates attending events increased by 107%**
- **Estimated £2 million saving as a result of the improved knowledge and absence management skills acquired by managers.**

Background

Size:	838 employees
Sector:	Public Sector
Location:	London
Status:	Most recently recognised in 2008.

The organisation

The Natural History Museum has attained the prestigious Investors in People standard and is one of only a handful of Museums' in the UK to now be accredited. The Museum was praised by the Investors in People recognition panel for a progressive approach to people management and development.

Selected by *Time Out* in 2007 as one of the Seven Wonders of London, the Natural History Museum is also a world-leading science research centre. Through its collections and scientific expertise, the Museum is helping to conserve the extraordinary richness and diversity of the natural world with groundbreaking projects in 68 countries.

"Our planning and management systems are highly regarded by all professions within the Museum, from housekeepers to renowned scientific researchers."

Dr Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum



The challenge

Attaining Investors in People was a key objective of the Museum's corporate strategy so it was imperative that it was achieved. Striving to set themselves apart as pioneering, with a reputation for being a landmark and attracting tourists, made it ever more important to secure the accolade. As a business they wanted to use Investors in People as a tool to help them value and motivate their people. By celebrating and rewarding their employees through Investors in People it would only help in attaining both these objectives.

By committing to Investors in People they could improve the clarity that employees had about their roles, raise the level of support and development provided and offer all staff more involvement in the business, which would lead to greater empowerment.

The strategy

Seventy-one people from across the Museum including research scientists, exhibition developers and engineers were interviewed over a six day period. This ensured that the information captured was comprehensive, involving employees of different levels across all areas of the work force, including a large number of voluntary employees.

Corporate plans, departmental plans and individual work plans were aligned so that they were all working towards the same goal and, most importantly, everyone knew what that goal was. In particular, the Learning and Development strategy was made more effective by being aligned with corporate objectives, with the Museum Training Plan being developed in conjunction with Head of Departments and from information extracted from individual departmental plans. Leadership and Management also became a focus for improvement with management effectiveness coming under the spotlight, as it needed to be used as a tool for improving performance.

Working towards Investors in People accreditation encouraged many improvements within the Museum which will continue to benefit the organisation and its employees into the future:

- The set up of a working group called 'People Group'
- Diagnostic assessments to assess where they were in relation to Investors in People
- Development and implementation of an action plan
- The corporate planning process was improved and a Planning Director appointed
- The Learning and Development function was enhanced to provide a more comprehensive service.

- Better training evaluation: they have started to work on checking learning transfer back at the workplace and tracking the success of learning with individual participants over time. This can be seen with the addition of events like the assertiveness reflection session and external networking follow up sessions.
- Standards of management improved by introducing management competencies and a management development programme.
- Introduction of competencies for key areas including curators, managers, front line and directors - 45% employees are now covered by competencies.
- Introduction of a Team Brief System to improve communication and consultation.

The results

The final report highlighted several areas of strength in the Museum, including:

- Corporate planning – providing a clear link with departmental and individual job plans
- Learning and Development – significant progress has been made over the last few years to ensure that clear strategies and systems are in place
- Strong commitment to diversity and equality for staff – including forums for staff to discuss issues as well as consistent procedures when recruiting, selecting, inducting and appraising staff
- People can clearly identify their contribution to the Museum's success and feel appreciated for their efforts.

Workshops and presentations have been held across the Museum and the feedback from these is already being acted upon by senior management. Current actions include the piloting of face to face briefings, the introduction of a Heads of Departments Investors in People forum and the implementation of an action plan following up on the Investors in People diagnostic report.

Attendance and participation in training days has increased from 312 to 480 compared to the same quarter last year. Also notably the number of delegates attending events has increased by 107% on comparison with the same quarter last year from 320 to 664 participants.

Natural History Museum were assessed by Capital Quality Limited, the Investors in People Centre for London.



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