



100 Days

When you start any form of change it is essential that there is a realistic timetable and that there are some early wins.

Without sounding too academic, our experience demonstrates, there is certainly some truth in the theory that the major impact should be achieved in the first one hundred days in any development project.

Change is often viewed with suspicion, “ we have always done it this way” is not an unusual response; at Redarch we would never promote change for changes sake, however, the world, the markets and the technology does evolve and our businesses need to realign as it does, keeping the best of the old and adopting the best of the new.

Although Redarch Associates treats all of its Clients’ affairs in complete confidence, sometimes a Client will wish to be featured in the press and the following extract shows just one of these events which was published in a number of National and Local newspapers.

We can not guarantee that your business will develop in the same way as the one featured in the article, indeed that may not be what you want it to do, but the Redarch team will work side by side with you to help develop the strategic growth and attain the goals you set, helping you to set Best Practice not just follow it.

To discuss the way you want to move your business forward contact us on 01376 573767 and arrange an appointment.

Since Redarch was established in 1995 our team of seasoned business professionals have offered their experience and knowledge in all aspects of business.

We work as advisors within your operations with demands on our services being dictated by the growth and development of the business and the individuals therein.

Our Service is there to guide and support not to dictate or take control, it is your business and we never forget this.

If you are ready to start investing in the future of your business and optimising the returns then call us on 01376 57 37 67.

INSIDE TRACK

MANAGEMENT OUTSTANDING MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

Making an impact in 100 days**Richard Donkin** finds out about culture change at ICS, safety and control systems manufacturers

Earlier this year the Institute of Personnel and Development published a study that made a positive link between progressive people management practices and enhanced productivity and profits. The report, *The Impact of People Management Practices on Business Performance* (FT, January 8), was based on the results of seven years* work by the University of Sheffield and the London School of Economics. This is the fourth in a series looking at management practices at some of the best small to medium-sized manufacturing companies in the UK that were tracked in the study.

Glenn Cooper made quite an impact on the day he took up his post as managing director at ICS, safety and control systems manufacturers, in Maiden, Essex, six years ago.

"I arrived at 10am and at 11am I sacked the manufacturing director. At 12am I sacked the technical director, so by lunchtime everybody knew I had arrived," he says.

"I think it was very clear to everybody that I was going to start at the top and not at the bottom. I suppose it was the classic 100 days to make an impact."

It was a difficult time for manufacturing, he says, not only because of the recession but because business process re-engineering, which offered lower cost production, required fundamentally different approaches to the way that work was managed and organised.

Flatter structures, total quality management, teamworking and empowerment presented new challenges for managements steeped in the traditions of command and control. Some managers understood the language of change. Across industry many who did not found themselves out of a job.

Mr Cooper made such an impression that he has now been made president of ICS Triplex, the biggest company in the 30-year-old quoted Industrial and Control Systems Group which is also headquartered in Maiden

has made its biggest strides are quality management and workforce communications. Quality control has been built into the working process with staff given responsibility for checking their own work.

Job timings, are arrived at through a process of discussion and negotiation between manager and employee. "We say here

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that ICS stands for implementing common sense because that's the way we look at quality," says Mr Cooper.

Some improvements come from suggestions posted in a quality improvements box. A team of employees called a quality communications group ensure that all ideas are considered. But it is

the way that the company disseminates information from the top that brought the greatest praise in the EPD study.

Each director at the monthly board meetings has a responsibility to pass on the decisions of the meetings to managers who must then relay the information to their teams. Any plans for the installation of new equipment are posted up on a notice board with the full schedule and dates attached.

"This allows anyone to question the schedule if they think it is unrealistic and to prepare for it happening," says Mr Cooper.

Its staff communications system was tested to the full earlier in the year when the group was forced to put together a refinancing package because of poor investments in other parts of the group. Now, with board changes at group level, the company believes it is well placed to build on its success.

All employees work to a yearly business plan, drawn up over three months and distilled into six priorities by senior managers working with Mr Cooper, who are then asked to put their names to it.

"Initially they were reluctant to sign the document but not now. It means they have read it, understood it and contributed to it," says Mr Cooper. The plan is then posted up so everyone can see it.

"We have been developing this process with the Redarch Associates Team, with plans to roll it out throughout the division," he says.

Managers are also being asked to undergo personality tests -- the company uses one published by Thomas International.

"Before asking them to go ahead I showed them one that had been completed about me. The idea is to point up strengths and weaknesses and see if we are fitted to the job," says Mr Cooper. One senior technician, he said, was one of the best people technically in the company but had no interest in managing people. "We need to have people working where they are most effective," he says.



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