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# INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Admiral Scaffolding Group Ltd

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On behalf of Capital Quality Limited

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## ■ Introduction

Admiral Scaffolding Group Ltd is based within an industrial area of Wimbledon, South West London. The site includes offices and a yard.

The Directors have been involved with the supply and construction of scaffolding to the construction industry since 1983. The Company has grown steadily over the years and in 2000 bought Admiral Scaffolding. In 2004, other businesses in the group were merged and moved to its current location.

The assessment of Admiral Scaffolding was carried out over two days and a representative sample of people from across the Company were interviewed and their views taken into account for this report. Eighteen people were spoken to using a mixture one-to-one's and groups as per guidelines from Investors in People UK.

This assessment was very well organised, with all people arriving promptly for their allotted interview times. All members of staff were open to all of the questions and were happy to answer questions. I would like to thank Terry and Adrian Withers for organising the interviews and the supervisors for their assistance. A mention should also be given to Zarina Naqvi, Business Consultant for providing supporting information and assistance to the process.

## ■ Executive Summary

Admiral Scaffolding has been running successfully for many years under the ownership of the Managing Director (MD), Terry Withers. There are a number of family members involved within the business and the MD has created a friendly atmosphere where people are happy coming to work.

The company is currently going through an extremely busy period and whilst many competitors are running reduced working weeks, Admiral have a record number of tendering opportunities.

Although the company have been successful for a number of years, there were areas of the business that appeared to need improving. Approximately 18 months ago, the company started to work with external consultants and embarked upon a Business Improvement Programme. Initial work included undertaking a 360% SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), involving staff and client feedback. The lack of repeat business came up as a key issue



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and along with a number of other issues went into the development of an action plan. These were then incorporated within the Business Plan.

The Construction Industry has been going through difficult times recently, but Admiral Construction have put in plans to ensure that the level of work remains constant.

The planning process starts at the top with the Directors and there is a comprehensive written Business Plan in place. The Plan is monitored, amended and reviewed on a regular basis using all members of staff. The Plan is also monitored in conjunction with an external Business Consultant.

Objectives from the Business Plan are cascaded in numerous ways and the company have ensured that information is regularly communicated through meetings, the website, the company newsletter and the appraisal process. Key objectives within the Business Plan have been cascaded to all departments and these form the basis of departmental and individual targets.

Training has always been important to the company and regular training has been made available through their trade body, Construction Skills (CITB). Health and Safety training has been important, particularly for site workers. However as Health and Safety Regulations have become more complex and wider ranging, all site workers now work towards a qualification; Apprenticeship or NVQ depending upon their age and experience.

Other members of staff are also included within the training programme and in the last twelve months further training has been added to support the business objectives.

Within the company, there is an inclusive approach towards planning and all staff are involved through formal and informal meetings and the appraisal process. There are regular team meetings facilitated by the Directors. The MD has created an atmosphere of collaboration and team-working throughout the company.

Through the links to the Trade Body (Construction Skills) regular training takes place for managers and supervisors. This training takes the form of legislative training, such as health and safety and employment law, and training on managing people. In the last twelve months, existing people management procedures have been formalised and training given to managers on these procedures. The industry's approach to managing staff has traditionally been to "tell them" and this has been an approach used by the company in the past. However,



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it could be seen across the company that the culture now in Admiral is definitely that of “ask them”.

The working environment and support given to staff has led to staff being very satisfied with the company, with many stating “this is the best company that I have worked for”. The welfare of the staff (working on site) is paramount and managers have the knowledge to implement safe working practices. The way in which managers treat staff, ensure that regular practical training is given and that staff input is regularly requested. There is a regular bonus paid based upon performance and celebrations take place when new business is won.

Regular weekly staff meetings take place to discuss all aspects of the business and to ensure that there are no problems or issues. If there are, solutions are identified and actions taken. Through these meetings, the objectives within the Business Plan are monitored and discussed.

Regular external support is used to monitor and review plans. Regular meetings take place with their Business Consultant to monitor action plans and to amend and implement new actions. A Director is responsible for all training and he regularly liaises with Construction Skills to monitor the training plan and agree required training courses.

The Company’s approach to meeting its objectives and the way in which it involves and supports its staff has led to numerous improvements. These improvements have led to a record year for the Company.

A number of issues were highlighted as being important for the Company and these were taken into account within the assessment process and feedback given within the findings:

- To ensure that the sales and marketing activity continues to generate the targeted numbers.
- To ensure that staff continue to have the skills to provide good quality work.

These priorities are also discussed in the attachment to the report.

▪ **Areas of Strength or Best Practice**

**Planning Process** – There is an effective and flexible planning process which starts with the Directors, with a clear process both for cascading information and for gaining input from staff and other stakeholders,

such as clients. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are used to drive the business and individuals are set objectives linked to the KPI's.

**Learning and Development** – Training is ongoing and for many, there is a strong emphasis on health and safety. Most staff work towards accredited training and the company fully supports staff in this with funding and time-off. There are regular toolbox talks (guided by Constructions Skills) which are used to discuss Health and Safety, updates on new practices and general communication. There is a written training plan which links to the business plan and training is planned in advance. The appraisal system is used to identify individual development.

**Management Support** – Throughout the Company, there were many examples of the support and encouragement given by managers. The Directors have years of experience and knowledge. All managers have the opportunity to have accredited management training.

**Evaluation** – Evaluation takes place on a regular basis. Due to the clear KPI's set within the planning process and the ongoing reviews through staff meetings, the Directors and staff are clear on the performance of the company. A bonus scheme is linked to the KPI's.

- **Areas where development could be considered  
(These areas are suggestions only and are not mandatory  
to meet the Standard)**

**Learning and Development** – The Company may wish to review the paperwork that it uses to plan training so that it easily links to the business objectives and is easy to review.

The company may wish to investigate funded training which could support the ongoing development of staff – accredited training includes IT and Accountancy.

**Team Briefing** – As the company grows, it might like to consider implementing a system of team briefing, whereby the same message is cascaded to all staff at a similar time.

**Management Capabilities** – Although the roles and responsibilities are clear, these could be incorporated into the managers' own appraisal paperwork to assist with their own development. These could also be reviewed and amended in line with the future requirements of the company.

**Middle Managers** – The Company has gone through a period of rapid growth. With the future in mind, the company might like to consider developing the Middle Management Structure:- defining the manager's role; defining the management capabilities required by the organisation for now and for the future, so that they link into the remit of **"Succession Planning"** and **"Career Development"**.

**Individual Development Plans - IDP/Learning Logs** – The Company may wish to consider offering staff the use of Individual Development Plans or Learning Logs, especially for new members of staff. This is also a particularly useful document for in-house or on-the-job training. Whilst IDP's can be used for key learning points (to be discussed at appraisal or team meetings), Learning Logs are able to log issues, problems or just questions (that can be kept for a later date).

**Recognition** – The Company has a number of ways in which it recognises and values its staff; however, it may also wish to consider further ways in which it could motivate staff – such as team member of the month, year, etc. This system could also be used in conjunction with a annual staff suggestion scheme or survey – a small gift for the best ideas?

## ■ Assessment Findings

The client has requested a summary version of the Report and this is presented under the three principles of the Standard:

- **Plan ( Indicators 1 – 4)**
- **Do (Indicators 5 – 8)**
- **Review (Indicators 9 and 10)**

Examples of evidence found under each heading are summarised and follow the format of the Standard.

### **Plan (Indicators 1 – 4)**

- The Company has a Mission Statement and this has been used to underpin the Business Objectives – "To be the first choice supplier of scaffolding to the professional industry in the south east".
- There is a written Business Plan which is reviewed, amended and set on an annual basis, in conjunction with all key stakeholders (including staff, customers and suppliers).
- Clear and specific objectives are stated using Key Performance Indicators and these are used to monitor and measure performance.

- There are no representative groups.
- Managers use a variety of ways to involve people in the Business Plan (BP). Regular opportunities for communication such as Staff Meetings and Appraisals are used throughout the year to monitor, review and update the BP and to gain feedback and input. **“There are lots of meetings”**
- Last year saw the introduction of a staff newsletter in order to keep staff updated on what is happening across the company. Site staff are sent a text to let them know that the latest version has been produced and hard copies can be found in the office.
- There are regular departmental meetings:
  - Wages
  - Credit Control
  - Contractors
- Regular updates ensure that people are very clear about the role of their team and what the company is trying to achieve. People are also very clear about their individual roles and regularly work within teams and understand how they can have a direct impact on the company objectives; individual objectives are linked to KPI’s. People have been encouraged to meet with colleagues with a view to sharing ideas on how to meet objectives. For example: **“It’s good to have clear targets”**
  - Discussing future work and the labour that will be required
  - Ensuring all that all staff information has been communicated to ensure that payroll runs efficiently
- There is a commitment towards learning for the whole of the company and a clear training programme for staff. Training is clearly linked to the overall business objectives.
- All staff have access to training, are encouraged to develop further and offered resources to support them. Training is through a mixture of formal external (usually accredited) training, toolbox talks on site and in-house training.
- All staff are included within the Performance Management System, which takes place on a six-monthly basis. This process is used to formally discuss the year’s performance and development

undertaken. It is also used to identify forward objectives and to identify future development. The Business Plan's Objectives directly link to the objectives in the appraisal system. **"I look forward to them"**

- Where possible, development takes place for the whole company or for teams. For example, marketing training has taken place for all office based staff and toolbox talks (usually regarding Health and Safety) take place weekly for site based staff.
- People are clear on what they should be learning in their training sessions. Examples of people describing what planned learning should achieve for them included:
  - PPE – Safety Equipment Training – what equipment should be worn, when and why.
  - The NVQ and Apprenticeship for scaffolders gives a structured training programme for fitting scaffolding and an emphasis on health and safety
- There are many ways that the managers demonstrate that ideas are encouraged. This includes allowing staff the freedom to do their job, open forum sessions at staff meetings and open discussions on site. The managers have built up a culture where people are expected to take on responsibility and are empowered to make decisions. People are routinely asked for their input. People also confirmed that they are encouraged to input ideas into any aspect of the company and these are ideas are regularly acted upon. **"We try to take their ideas on board"** For example:
  - Pre-site discussions on the best way to approach the project
  - Contract and departmental managers having the freedom to come up with ideas on how to meet their area targets
- All staff have access to development and are included within the appraisal process. Some site staff work on a self-employed basis but have the same training programme as their company-employed colleagues.
- Managers have been involved within the business for many years and attended numerous accredited courses through Construction Skills. These courses have identified knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers. These are discussed formally through the performance management system. Regular training of managers and regular management meetings, ensure that managers are clear on their roles and responsibilities. This includes:

- Knowledge – Fitting Techniques, Health, Safety and Employment Law
  - Skills – Carrying out appraisals and facilitating staff meetings
  - Behaviours – Encouraging staff and having a “can you” and “what do you think” approach
- People were also clear on what managers should be doing to lead, manage and develop them. With such a focus on people development most staff highlighted this as a key requirement together with communication and the appraisal process. The level of Health and Safety knowledge of the managers ensures that people are confident in their managers and that there is a good working environment.

### **Do (Indicators 5 – 8)**

- Managers and staff could give many examples of how managers, including senior managers had been effective in their role. E.g. facilitating the staff meetings, ensuring that development takes place and conducting the appraisal process.
- All staff were positive about the support that comes from managers and that their opinions are always valued, along with support always being there.
- There were several examples from both managers and staff about how recognition and appreciation was shown throughout the company. Examples include public recognition in meetings for a job well done, team celebrations and verbal thank yous. People also felt appreciated because their ideas had been taken onboard or that development undertaken had supported their working knowledge and/or career development. The level of training is motivating for staff and where possible, promotions are made from existing staff.  
**“It’s an opportunity to praise us”**
- Examples of how people provide feedback and input and felt they made a positive difference to the company included:
  - Staff have made savings in their area of responsibility – a reduction in water rates and saving on equipment purchased
  - Bringing in-house a number of services, such as payroll and purchase ledger activities, saving on the cost of external expertise

- Managers ensure people's development needs are met through the regular feedback conversations which provide an opportunity to check progress against their objective plan. The central co-ordination of the training plan also acts as a double check to ensure development is happening and feedback is usually given at staff or team meetings.
- There are many examples of what people have learnt and how this had been applied to their day to day job:
  - Health and Safety training giving people the knowledge of what equipment to wear before work starts and to understand the potential dangers of certain situations
  - Marketing training has led to staff being aware of that they represent the company at all times and create the image – "how do we talk to clients" or "being aware of our behaviour on site".
- People new to the company or new in role were very positive about their experience and had found the process an effective way to learn. For site workers, there is a comprehensive induction, linked to Health and Safety and a formal training programme. The induction for office based staff is less formal, but appropriate.

### **Review (Indicators 9 – 10)**

- There is a written training plan and a clearly defined budget for development which is monitored on a regular basis by the Directors. The plan is also approved on a regular basis by the representative of their trade body, Construction Skills, due to the levy that the company pays and the training grant that it receives in return. A third party auditor regularly makes site visits and feeds back on any areas that need attention.
- Changes and improvements which were started eighteen months ago are starting to have a positive impact on the Company **"Clients are happy"**:
  - The volume of work has risen in a difficult market.
  - There has been a large rise in new clients.
  - Repeat business used to be a problem, but repeat business has now increased.
  - In order to accommodate the volume of work, the company has had to increase the number of staff.
  - The financial turnover has increased.

- The ability to analyse website statistics and make actions has improved; web searches currently show the company on the fourth page of Google, with a target of being on page one.
- Top Managers could describe how development had positively impacted on the performance of the company:
  - Staff have been trained so that the payroll and tax are now undertaken in-house. Previously, this was done externally at extra cost.
  - All staff have undertaken Health and Safety Training. This is a key area of site safety and evidence must be given to clients in order for them to be allowed on site.
  - All client-facing staff have received Marketing Training. This training concentrated on the image of the company and how the image gained of staff underpins the company profile. Evaluation and feedback was given with the support of a mystery shopper service.
- There is good evidence that development activity has been reviewed and enhancements and amendments are being made where appropriate. For example:
  - All staff are part of the Business Planning Process
  - There has been a recent improvement to the appraisal process whereby direct line managers are now involved. Previously the process was done just by the Directors.
  - There has been a change to the staff structure which has led to an improvement in communication and ownership and responsibility.
  - There are more areas of responsibility for staff
- Admiral Scaffolding is a well established successful business. However, in the last eighteen months the company decided that it needed to review all areas of the business and make improvements to improve its efficiency. The key improvements identified by staff across the company included:
  - The encouragement by managers for staff to have a say
  - Communication has improved and is much quicker
  - There is a better structure to the company
  - There is more training and in most cases is accredited

## ■ Recommendation and Next Steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Assessors by Investors in People UK, the Assessor is totally satisfied that Admiral Scaffolding Group Ltd meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

Investors in People recognition is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that reviews take place no greater than 3 years apart. Reviews can be undertaken at any time and the organisation should discuss the timing of the first review with their Assessor and Adviser, using the Improvement Planning Meeting to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework

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## ■ Options for your next Review

### **Investors in People Rolling Review**

Rolling Review is a popular model for ongoing assessment which builds evidence over a three year timeframe, rather than all at once every three years. An annual visit can be focussed on the parts of the framework most relevant to you at the time, reflect changing business priorities and focus on different parts of your organisation at different stages.

### **Internal Review**

Internal Review is a flexible review option available to all Investor in People organisations. It was introduced because recognised organisations identified that they wanted more involvement and ownership of their post recognition reviews. Internal Review works on selected principles of quality assured self-assessment and must be conducted with the full involvement of Capital Quality Limited. We develop your people to a nationally approved standard, providing you with an internal resource to enable you to monitor your own performance, target your resources appropriately and participate more fully in the review process.

### **Investors in People Interactive**

This free online support tool is designed to guide you through development activities and help you maintain the benefits of using Investors in People as an organisational development tool. Obtain an



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on-going understanding of your organisation's current strengths and development areas by using the tool's diagnostic function which is built around 5 management practices which relate directly to the Investors in People indicators

You can also review and update your progress within the tool and access a wide range of downloads, good practice tips, templates and other resources to inspire and inform - no matter where you are on your Investors in People journey

[www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive](http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive)

### **Promoting continuous improvement**

CQL offers an integrated advice and assessment support service, as well as workshops, surgeries and networking events to promote continuous improvement and maximize the benefits of working with the Standard. Details of the support available to you can be found on: -

Internet:  [www.cqlgroup.co.uk](http://www.cqlgroup.co.uk)

Telephone:  **020 7492 5901**

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**Annex A  
Outcomes Table**

**Evidence Requirements Framework Matrix**

Core Standard										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
5	N/A		✓						✓	
6	✓									

Wider Framework										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core				Core	
5	Core		Core						Core	
6	Core									
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► **Review Findings Against Organisational Priorities**

<b>ORGANISATIONAL GOAL OR PRIORITY</b>	<b>KEY AREAS FROM THE CORE STANDARD</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL AREAS FROM THE WIDER FRAMEWORK</b>
<p>To ensure that the sales and marketing activity continues to generate the targeted numbers.</p> <p>To ensure that staff continue to have the skills to provide good quality work.</p>	<p>There is a clear mission statement which drives the objectives within the business plan.</p> <p>Evaluation of the company’s sales and marketing activities and feedback from previous and existing clients has led to a dedicated marketing strategy within the business plan and skills requirements have been identified. In-house marketing sessions have taken place for all client-facing staff.</p> <p>Evaluation of clear</p>	<p>The Business Plan (BP) is used to define the learning and development of staff and incorporates an improvement strategy for the company.</p> <p>A culture of learning on a daily basis exists, with knowledge sharing taking place at most meetings.</p> <p>Key Performance Indicators are used within the BP to monitor and measure progress; these are communicated to and understood by staff.</p>



	<p>targets within the marketing strategy and client feedback have been noted and the level of performance increased.</p> <p>Learning and Development plans link to the Company's priorities and plans are in place which reflects the needs of the whole organisation and at all levels.</p> <p>Staff at all levels are able to identify their own development requirements through day-to-day contact with their line managers and through the formal performance management system. Formal accreditation ensures a process of constant observation and evaluation of</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:</b></p> <p>As the challenges and issues that face the company change, the company may like to review and identify the future capabilities that will be required, particularly by the Directors. There are a number of ways that this can be achieved, such as a SWOT Analysis of Strategic Capabilities.</p>
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