

CASE STUDY



FONACAB LTD

“It is our commitment to and encouragement in Investors in People which has strengthened the fonaCAB approach to the development of its people and the achievement of business goals”.

Simon Sims, General Manager



BACKGROUND

- Size:** 60 employees
- Sector:** Taxi Transport
- Location:** Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Status:** First Taxi organisation to achieve Investors in People recognition in June 2009

THE ORGANISATION

fonaCAB is a privately owned family operated taxi provider and the first taxi firm in Northern Ireland to have achieved Investors in People recognition. William McCausland is the Managing Director and over the years has developed fonaCAB from a small taxi firm to the largest Belfast-based taxi provider with depots in both the South and East of the city.

It employs 60 administration staff and 500 drivers and has a reputation for providing a professional and consistent service, pushing the boundaries of customer service. fonaCAB was the first to introduce computerised dispatch, in-car meters, roof signs, and uniformed drivers in private hire cars in Northern Ireland.

THEIR VISION

To be recognised as the largest reputable provider of taxi services in all areas of Belfast – supported by a number of values and the motto: “Always First”.



Simon Kitchen and Joanne McGleenan, fonaCAB receiving their Investors in People Award at Hillsborough Castle

- **Reduction in Customer Complaints**
- **Reduction in Staff Turnover and Absenteeism**
- **Increased Profits**

THE CHALLENGE

In 2008 fonaCAB's senior management took part in workshops that identified the strengths and weaknesses within the organisation. Following a survey with staff, drivers and customers it was identified that staff morale was low and there were issues around training, development and communication.

In the call centre, the survey highlighted issues of communication – a percentage of staff were not informed of changes to the booking system and changes in company policy and felt they were unable to perform their job competently. Supervisors confirmed that indeed there was no formal on-going training for staff and because of time constraints, individual employees did not get enough support. Supervisors also stated that they had little knowledge of training but stated they would like to progress to enhance job satisfaction and feel more confident in their job role.

Amongst the Driving fleet the surveys highlighted the number of customer complaints received, that drivers lacked customer service skills and knowledge of how to exceed the customer's expectations.

It was clear that all of these issues had a potential detrimental affect on business performance. fonaCAB quickly realised it needed to devise a plan to improve the quality and workmanship within the call centre and administration team, enhance the customer care, staff morale and confidence. Senior Management felt that Investors in People provided a useful framework to do just that.

THE STRATEGY

In order to help fonaCAB achieve the Investors in People Standard, Assistant Manager, Joanne McGleenan, contracted one of the NI Investors in People Advisers. With the results of the surveys, together with the help of the Adviser, Joanne and the Management, team were able to develop a strategic business plan. Joanne explains: "For our strategic plan to really work, we were adamant that it had to incorporate measurable targets for all areas of the business. We started the process with a one-to-one training needs analysis with the supervisors and dispatchers followed by consultations with all staff members regarding their needs and skills requirements." From this, fonaCAB developed a training policy and plan for the organisation which clearly defined all people in the organisation and entitled all to training appropriate to their job role.

For individuals the learning objectives were to improve interpersonal skills by providing training on areas such as Telephone Technique, Effective Communication Skills, Customer Service skills and Supervisory training. The learning objectives were designed in line with the organisation's goals. Joanne adds how fonaCAB then looked at the driving fleet: "For the driving fleet, we initially delivered a "Welcome Host" training course. However, on evaluation it was decided that there was not enough information about fonaCAB and its procedures so we developed our own in-house training programme for the drivers which we ensured was reflective of information gathered from a representative sample of drivers."

In March 2009 all drivers successfully completed the in-house training course. fonaCAB are now hoping to have this course accredited, if this happens it could potentially expand training facilities to include training for all taxi drivers and be the first company in Northern Ireland to provide a vocational qualification.

THE RESULTS

At the beginning of 2010, fonaCAB reported real and tangible business benefits as a direct result in improving the business through the Investors in People process:

- reduction in customer complaints,
- reduction in missed calls by the call-centre,
- increase in profits from last year,
- increase in customer accounts,
- reduction in staff turnover and absenteeism,
- increase in staff satisfaction and retention of fleet vehicles.

fonaCAB now actively encourages learning at all levels and as a result is seeing employees wanting to develop their career within the organisation. Feedback through surveys identified that employees now feel supported undertaking learning and development activities, from on-the-job skills development to offsite training which includes: CIPD membership through the qualification route and Discipline and Grievance Procedures - "How to conduct a disciplinary Hearing" and NVQs.

Employees have also agreed that communication within fonaCAB has improved, especially with the addition of regular staff meetings when all staff are given an opportunity to contribute. Supervisors are also now more effective in dealing with concerns.

Joanne concludes: "fonaCAB achieved Investors in People recognition in June 2009. This was a major achievement for the entire organisation, one that we are committed to retaining for the future. We will ensure that fonaCAB is committed to continuous improvement and our achievement at being the first taxi provider in Northern Ireland to have achieved Investors in People only strengthens our motto: "Always First!"

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSOR COMMENTS

The following is a list of strengths and positive features recognised by the Assessor as representing good practice:

- Sound vision and business plan which is well communicated to
- Clearly defined Vision and Business Objectives
- Business Planning and Training & Development Planning processes firmly in place.
- Cascading of Organisational Objectives down to teams and individuals - which focus on the contribution expected at all levels.
- People provided with constructive feedback on performance
- Senior management commitment to supporting people's learning and development at all levels.
- Overall a strong culture of learning and improving from feedback from customers, drivers and staff.