



A roadmap for SME success

Investors in Excellence journey continues for Espace Europe Ltd



Espace Europe and the Investors in Excellence Standard

- We've worked with Espace Europe Ltd. since 2010 when the recession hit – they needed a partner who could take their business to the next level
- Espace chose to work with Investors in Excellence as they recognised that our Standard takes an overall, holistic view of their organisation - by initially working through our Diagnostic Assessment, we helped them to identify key areas of focus
- The organisation has achieved the Investors in Excellence Standard twice already and has committed to recertification in 2016
- Espace's profits continue to grow as they focus on doing things smarter and better.



Investors in Excellence inspires confidence in abilities of all individuals change negatives to positives. The leadership approach is always to create something special; to punch above it's weight and focus amongst all staff the drive to continuously improve

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Background to Espace Europe

Espace Europe Ltd provides European road, sea and airfreight solutions to over 500 UK and European customers. The organisation works with blue-chip manufacturers and large multinational logistics companies, who see it as an extension of their shipping department due to the knowledge and expertise they have in the European road freight, sea and air freight markets.

Espace has appointed partners in most European countries, many of whom they have worked with for over 10 years. They also have an extensive network of shipping lines, Non Vessel Owning Common Carriers (NVOCCs) and air freight agents enabling them to provide their customers with the best price/service offering for their sea and air freight requirements.

Espace Europe's Challenges

November 2010 was a turning point for Espace. Over the decade prior to that time, in a booming market, the organisation had rapidly grown organically but when the recession hit it lost £2million in turnover.

The Espace owners knew they needed a springboard to take their business to the next level. The damage the recession was causing made them question themselves – they knew the answer wasn't to employ more sales staff but instead to look more close to home to see where they could inherently improve the business. They recognised that they needed to look closely at their systems and processes and at the way they treated their customers and partners.

That's when they turned to Investors in Excellence.

Espace and Investors in Excellence working together

Determined to succeed and not afraid to be held accountable, a formal commitment was made to achieve the Investors in Excellence Standard within two years. They chose our Standard because of the overall, holistic view it takes of an organisation. We would go on to analyse each of their business areas one step at a time and at a pace that Espace could manage alongside their day-to-day operations.

We started by conducting a diagnostic assessment of the organisation. Setting out the key areas of focus helped them to move towards their vision of being the best in class, loved by their staff, trusted by their customers and respected by their peers. With this vision in mind we guided and facilitated them to be able to work one-by-one through the key indicators of the Investors in Excellence Standard.

The Benefits

Investors in Excellence gave Espace Europe's people the confidence they needed to bring about necessary changes and establish a clear strategy of how to improve performance.

By working through the Diagnostic Toolkit and the Standard, we helped them to identify key areas of focus:

- Systematically they identified and prioritised the areas on which they needed to concentrate their efforts
- Critically they established a clear 'What Matters Most' statement and defined how they were best able to lead and resource the business
- Leadership became an area of focus so they could maximise the efforts of the two Owner-Directors
- Establishing a Quality Management System and adopting a process culture would be critical in efficiently delivering results.

The whole Espace team was involved in scoping out the requirements and led to the appointment of a team of 'champions' who were empowered to take over selected business critical development projects and who would attend regular Investors in Excellence workshops, learning the practical improvement tools and regularly report back on progress.

Holding Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control (DMAIC) workshops also gave them some invaluable tools and techniques, which they were able to use immediately on live business projects. Very quickly they began to make progress.

The Results

In 2012, Espace Europe was awarded certification as an Investor in Excellence. A major achievement for all involved, it clearly demonstrated how quickly they were able to move forward. In turn, their turnover expanded and profits increased.

The assessment process, and indeed the written feedback report, gave them areas for further improvement. They were able to scope out the next leg of the journey for continued success for the business and to enable them to uphold their certification.

The next two years were spent refining existing and new processes, constantly looking for continuous improvement and being customer driven. In 2014 the organisation was successfully certificated for a second time and has committed to continue on to recertification in 2016.

These days, they're not chasing turnover. Instead their profits continue to grow as they focus on doing things smarter and better and doing things the right way.

For Espace, the journey continues and hopefully will continue for years to come as together we methodically work through each area of their business. Investors in Excellence has provided them with a model around which they continuously improve and they recognise that validation from an external body such as Investors in Excellence provides invaluable confirmation of business resilience and excellent performance.

In their own words: "At the heart of our goals and objectives is continuous improvement and achievement of ongoing success. Achieving the Standard is very important to us but it's what we learn along the way that matters most. Once we have achieved the Standard, the journey will continue. Maintaining certification as an Investor in Excellence, we shall have to demonstrate that we are continuously challenging our organisation to stretch and improve"

"Investors in Excellence gave us the focus, the structure and the discipline we needed to really understand our business, it's drivers and the route to improved business performance".

Tony Shally, Managing Director, Espace Europe Ltd.



Could we help you? Contact our team on +44 (0)121 746 3150

What Matters Most?

Identify • Focus • Transform

Dedicated to helping you identify and understand the critical success factors of your organisation, maintain focus and ensure that all improvement actions deliver maximum benefits against What Matters Most to you.



The IIE Standard

Leading • Resourcing • Delivering • Achieving

Our unique framework for improvement and assessment – and your roadmap to high performance.

Toolkit



Approaches

