

Case study

Esporta Health Clubs



Esporta was formed in 1990 and is now one of the UK's leading health club operators with an impressive expansion schedule. Esporta comprises of large out of town multi facility health and racquet clubs and smaller city centre fitness units, branded 'club indigo'.

Whilst tennis, badminton and squash play an important part in the multi facility units, fitness is central to Invicta's facility offerings. Usually featuring an indoor and outdoor pool, with all new clubs benefiting from a separate sports hall and beauty salon, Esporta members can expect the highest standards of exercise technology at affordable prices.

Already with 16 centres across the UK, Esporta plans to increase this number and to open a club in German, with the first one in Keil opening at the end of the year.

The Issues

The fitness industry is renowned for its rapid growth in the UK. Most towns in the UK now have at least one facility, with some larger towns having up to five. The intensity of the industry means that the larger leisure companies are having to look closely at their human resources programmes to overcome high staff churn rates and ensure effective training methods are in place. Many have implemented training and retention programmes to reduce staff turnover and enable staff to move up the career ladder within their own company.

To meet increasing member requirements and to avoid the high levels of staff turnover, Esporta adopted a style of management they called 'contingent management'. Staff turnover is an issue for most leisure focused companies, fast paced career programmes and hectic lifestyles mean that companies can be constantly recruiting to fill positions as staff are promoted or leave. Realising that individual employees behaved differently under different styles of management, Esporta wanted to investigate this

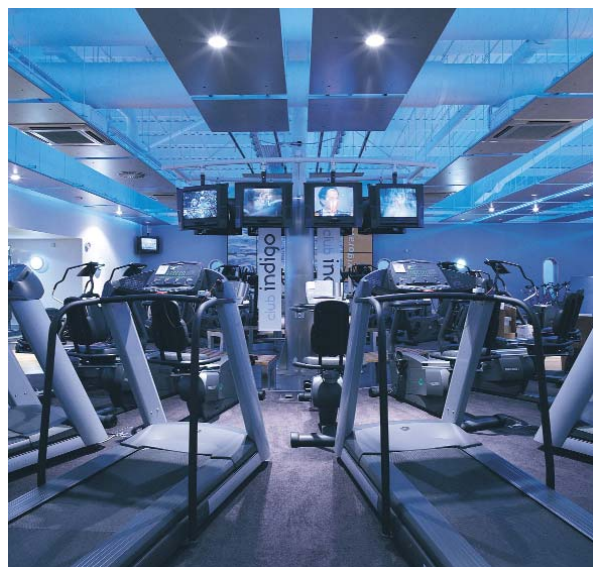
further to maximise potential and focus ability on strong behavioural characteristics.

Kevin Cowell, Group Training Manager for Esporta Health Clubs comments, "It is common to find young and vibrant staff in senior roles in our clubs, but the speed of promotion can mean awareness of management styles and procedures are not properly developed. We need to be aware of our employee's behaviours in order to understand their motivators and assist them in career progression programmes."

The Solution

In 1995 Esportaintroduced Thomas International's Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) and the Human Job Analysis (HJA) as part of their recruitment and retention programme and to compliment the company's forward thinking and 'issue aware' management style.

The PPA assesses an individual's behaviour in the work environment. The test poses a series of questions, taking no more than seven minutes to complete, with the answers charted on a graph under the four headings of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and



Compliance (DISC). The PPA is used to trace behavioural patterns and predict likely behaviours at work.

Using the PPA in partnership with the HJA, Esporta have profiled all of the job roles within the company to establish behavioural differences and preferred requirements of each role. Structured to dissect a job into its constituent parts, the HJA creates a profile of a position against which a candidate can be compared.

Cowell comments "Using the PPA and HJA from day one has enabled both senior management and employees to get involved. Working together with staff and management teams has enabled us to compare job requirements to daily capabilities to ensure we have a well rounded and accurate HJA."

Since 1999, Esporta centres have been using the PPA and HJA nationwide, with each centre having a trained representative to conduct PPA and HJA profiling.

Staff are requested to complete PPA's throughout their period of employment with Invicta Leisure, starting with the interview process. The result helps the candidate understand their strengths and weaknesses and clarify their goals and career options. It generates self awareness by charting employees' likely behaviour and operating styles and provides an indication of how their behaviour could be modified for their own and the company's best interests.

The results from the PPA has enabled centre management teams to generate competency profiles and establish attitudes, knowledge and skill levels. The PPA is then completed every six months by full time staff to assist in appraisals, training and career development.

"The decision to extend Thomas' tools nationwide coincided with our decision for a more comprehensive HR plan following the growth of the company. The tools have complimented and enhanced the process of recruitment and given us knowledge to plan for the future," commented Cowell. "The increased knowledge has made us more aware of the needs of our staff

and the requirements from each job. This will have a positive impact on the business."

One example of this was highlighted at the Lancashire centre when a young business graduate with languages, employed as a Membership Administrator completed a PPA. The results indicated that she wanted more challenges within her current role. Esporta used the PPA as a questioning tool to investigate her career goals in more detail. Esporta addressed this and she is now receiving further training for a role working with the management team on plans for expansion into Germany.

“Thomas’ tools have complemented and enhanced the process of recruitment and given us knowledge to plan for the future”

Kevin Cowell, Invicta Leisure Group

Summary

Invicta Leisure's consistent growth over the past 10 years has enabled them to introduce the PPA and HJA partnership to enhance their human resources policy. The PPA and HJA have enabled Invicta Leisure's Training Department to implement procedures that encourage staff and management teams to get involved with personal and corporate development. Esporta are able to tailor career programmes and adopt management styles to employees behavioural patterns and future aspirations.

"As the industry continues to grow and becomes more competitive, having the right staff in the right positions is critical to us. However it is essential to ensure that our staff are happy and that management teams adopt a style that compliments their behaviour in order to achieve maximum results. Invicta have been using Thomas International managerial tools for five years now and they have given us a better understanding of what motivates team members to enable us to continue our aim to improve personal, team and corporate goals."