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Fred Bentley
Head of Workforce
Development
Black Country Chamber
and Business Link

Black Country Chamber of Commerce is one of the largest business membership organizations in the country. It represents and supports more than 2,000 local businesses through a program of lobbying and campaigning on key issues. It holds regular membership events and offers unrivalled opportunities for networking. Membership services include a legal helpline, debt recovery advice, discounted healthcare and AA fleet assistance.

Business Link can help in every aspect of business, from discussing initial ideas, to trading on the internet, right through to getting overseas clients. Their teams of business advisers who between them have over 1,000 years of experience help clients achieve their goals. In addition to which they now have dozens of online tools and diagnostics to help you inform your business decisions.

Director Development Program - The management and leadership skills of owner managers, partners and senior directors have a direct impact on the successful performance of a business. The Black Country Chamber and Business Link have introduced a dedicated program of support for Black Country directors.

Directors are given a mentor to provide one-to-one coaching and development, impartial advice and guidance to identify, plan and evaluate the development needed to achieve business goals.

The Challenge

Each director is assigned a mentor who visits them and tries to mentor, coach and suggest career plans and training needs. This diagnostic process allows the mentors to successfully develop a plan for the directors. Black Country Chamber and Business Link needed assistance in these areas, so they choose Thomas' suite of human capital management tools.

Thomas International Case Study: Black Country Chamber &
Business Link

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The Solution

Fred Bentley, Head of Workforce Development, Black Country Chamber and Business Link comments, "we found Thomas' Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) both easy to use and widely applicable." Bentley comments, "the program demands that a certain level of personal interaction needs to take place between the mentor and director to ensure the objectives of the program are met and their goals properly identified. The PPA ensures that this interaction takes place."

Bentley continues, "the other main benefit is that it is personal. Many other tools look at company skills whereas this focuses on the individual. The assessment enables the directors to get a much better understanding of themselves. Are they a risk taker? Are they task driven? Do they get along with people?"

"The online PPA gives the director a clear understanding of the impact their behavior has on the people who work with and for them. Part of the feedback highlights how they work under pressure. One of the directors we were working with had never really given this any consideration before and looking at the graphs really got him thinking about how he impacted others around him. It gave a solid base to move forward," says Bentley.

"PPA also brings up issues around which coaching can be given. If the person has High Dominance ("D") (driven, competitive, assertive, goal orientated) it might be difficult for them to let other people do some of the work, to delegate, as they feel the need to retain control to succeed. If, on the other hand, they focus on facts and figures you can begin a discussion about the impact this style has on the business, and if a different style of work could produce different results?"

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The Result

Each director is assigned a mentor who visits them and uses Thomas International's Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) as part of the diagnostic process when setting the Personal Development Plan.

"It is extremely important for us to demonstrate that a debate has taken place, that there is no question that the directors have gone through a learning experience," explains Bentley.

One of the directors who went through this process was Ray Bereza, Advice and Guidance Director at Job Change in Wolverhampton. Job Change is a registered charity and helps around 700 people a week to access training and get back into work.

As a result of the training needs analysis carried out by his mentor, he identified that he wanted to do an MBA. Ray Bereza commented "This is a win-win situation for both myself and Job Change. The MBA will help me with the strategic, planning and financial aspects of my job. It also gives me the opportunity to broaden my horizons and feel personally fulfilled."

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ABOUT THOMAS INTERNATIONAL

For over 25 years, Thomas International has been a global leader in the provision of on-demand behavioral assessments and reporting used to recruit, develop and retain top talent.

Thomas International has a presence in 60 countries and availability in over 56 languages. More than a million Thomas International software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivered assessments are completed each year.