



Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust uses Thomas' human capital management tools to recruit managers, build teams and reduce absenteeism

Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust was formed in 1994 and serves a population of around 270,000. The Trust employs over 3,500 and has an annual budget of approximately £140 million. The Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff have the right skills at the right time to deliver the services today and develop the services of tomorrow.

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Alex Prescott
Assistant HR Director
Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust

The Challenge

Quite a few years ago, as part of the health service's management development strategy 'Better Management Better Health' the Trust designed its own management development plan which included exploring the use of personality tests for selection and development and criteria based interviews within an assessment centre. Its overall aim was to improve the standard of managers throughout the Trust and deliver safe high quality care.

Previously, staff had been promoted to managerial positions largely based on experience and competence in a clinical setting. However, there was a growing recognition that a good clinician does not necessarily make a good manager. In light of the Better Management initiative the Trust decided to define what it needed from its managers in terms of behavior.

Alex Prescott, Assistant HR Director, Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust comments, "we needed to look at how we would recruit fresh blood into the Trust in addition to developing our existing managers."

Thomas International Case Study: Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust

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The Solution

Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust uses Thomas’ proprietary behavioral assessment, the Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) for recruitment of managers, human capital management and as a team building exercises within one of its Clinical Directorates.

“Good management is so critical in today’s NHS that our recruitment decisions need to be the right ones. Thomas International’s Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) helps us in this process. It is has a valuable part to play in our strategic recruitment decisions,” explains Prescott.

PPA has also been used to reduce absence rates in a department where the absence rate was particularly high when compared with the Trust average, Prescott comments, “when we looked at the Trust’s overall absence rate it was about 5 per cent, however upon close investigation there were a couple of hotspots. For example, a section within the Pathology Directorate was running at about 25 per cent with a mixture of short and long term absence. Although we had a plan to manage sickness absence which included return to work interviews, one-to-ones, and occupational health referral, we needed to find the cause of the high rate of absence. We decided to delve deeper to discover what was going on. Thomas’ PPA profile highlighted frustrations and stresses that were occurring either in or out of work (by this we mean non-clinical stress). We profiled all of the microbiology team and then organized a series of one-to-ones with the managers to discuss individual profiles. The resulting action plan designed by staff themselves included organizing a communications workshop to address specific issues that arose. We looked at the internal structures with staff and asked them how they could be changed to improve their working lives. This made them feel part of the process and empowered to change.”

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The Result

Prescott comments, “the reports set out managers work styles in a non aggressive way: it allows them to see the things they do well and the things they do less well. We can then address the limitations with training to bring managers to where they need to be.”

Thomas' PPA played a crucial part in reducing absence from this department. From September 2003 to September 2004 it fell from 25 per cent to 0 per cent although other factors will have played a part also.

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“We use it as part of our recruitment and selection process for new managers. I am BPS Level A trained and have used a number of psychometric instruments over the years, but Thomas' Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) is good because it does not involve any 'psycho-babble' – it describes potential behavior in plain English,” says Prescott.

CONTACT

Kate Kerr
kathryn@thomas.co.uk
+ 44.1628.475.366

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.