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Nigel Risner suggests three strategies for business success



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How Thomas helped Ringrose Law Group successfully manage internal growth

THOMAS
INTERNATIONAL™



news

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Major developments at Thomas International...

Martin Reed CEO Thomas International UK Ltd



The last two quarters have seen some major developments here at Thomas International regarding improvements to our business systems and tools. The new Thomas

Benchmarking product offers you the most focused and effective way of ensuring that standards of people excellence in your business are maintained. On page 2 we outline what Thomas Benchmarking is, how it works and the benefits it can deliver to your business. We are also pleased to announce a new version of Tests for Selection and Training (TST), our aptitude and ability tests. The new version is the result of our continuous programme of research and development which ensures our business tools are the best they can be.

We also unveil the Personal Profile Analysis Technical Resource Book which

confirms the PPA as a valid and reliable indicator of how people see themselves. For some time now Thomas has sat firmly within the BPS environment. The Resource Book provides further incontrovertible validation of the PPA as a tool to assess behavioural characteristics at work, whether carried out face-to-face or online.

The newsletter also explores the challenges today's leaders face in business and the leadership skills required to successfully steer an organisation in a world where the rules are constantly changing. On page 5 we interview Brian Chernett and Dermot Fitzgerald from the Academy for Chief Executives about leadership techniques that will bring out the best in people and empower teams to achieve their goals. On page 4, Nigel Risner also shares his thoughts on the strategies companies can implement to achieve their business goals and be successful.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and I wish you an enjoyable summer.

Prague 2003 Conference

Thomas held its International Conference in Prague on 23rd – 25th April 2003. The International Conference is an opportunity for Thomas representatives around the world to come together and share their experiences. Forty two Thomas people attended the conference, which represented sixteen countries.

It was a chance to congratulate people for an exceptional year in 2002. Awards for outstanding sales success were presented to Sundara Rajan and Prahlad Rao from India and Theo and Mariska Kriebel from Holland.

2002 also saw management buyouts for Merle Ballaigues in Canada and Chris Schutte for South Africa and the Pacific Rim.



The conference included a presentation by Professor Sid Irvine who took the delegates through the technical aspects of the Personal Profile Analysis Technical Resource Book.

New Products: Benchmarking and TST

Thomas' success over the last twenty years can be attributed to several things - strong teamwork, excellent service, the best technology and a clear focus. However one of the cornerstones to our business is our dedicated and continuous programme of product development. Thomas is committed to providing the best strategic business tools that will deliver maximum value to your organisation. Thomas is therefore pleased to announce the launch of a new Benchmarking product as well as an updated version of Tests for Selection and Training.

TST Version 2

These are the latest and most advanced normative aptitude tests available.

The tests help you to:

- Uncover potential high flyers
- Make your training much more focused and effective
- Minimise the risk of expensive selection errors

See page 3 for a more detailed overview of TST Version 2.

New Thomas Benchmarking

This will give you the competitive edge your business needs in a tough market. It can reduce the cost of selection, training and management as well as improving the performance of a work group by up to 30 per cent. It will:

- Dramatically improve communication
- Boost the morale of your workforce
- Create higher standards
- Promote a better understanding amongst your team members

A complete overview of the Benchmarking product is on page 2.

Thomas launches new Benchmarking product

Thomas International is pleased to announce that it will be launching its new Benchmarking product in October 2003. Thomas Benchmarking has been designed to deliver maximum benefit to an organisation by enabling it to identify and replicate the performance of its best people.

Benchmarking is a continuous improvement process that uses a systematic approach to raising and maintaining high performance standards, against which new employees can be assessed and selected. It identifies a company's top performers and tells them what makes their best people just that. Benchmarking raises the performance standards of a work group by selecting new recruits based on the profiles of the best performers.

Thomas Benchmarking has several major new features including:

Interview Bias – Managers are likely to recruit people with a similar profile to themselves which can lead to interview bias. This new item alerts an organisation if individuals are being selected because of the interviewer's personal preference rather than because of an objective assessment.

Coaching and Managing Summary –

This summary is designed to be given to all those who manage any person included in the benchmark. It helps the managers understand why each person in their team behaves the way they do and coaches them to respond accordingly. This insight will lead to a deeper understanding that can then be used to hone a manager's communication skills and maximise the performance of the team. The summary is set out in bullet points and looks at what motivates the top performers, what they expect and want and the type of manager they work best for.

Family Profiles – In the section headed Statistical and Detailed Analysis the family profiles are now ranked in order of best performance using the following criteria:

Most top performers, Most fully acceptable performers, Least to most poor performers. It also identifies the percentage of poor performers.

Goodness of Fit - Previously we may have been able to identify only one or two acceptable profiles. The new product



enables Thomas to apply these one or two to the 'Goodness of Fit' chart in order to provide up to 5 or 6 acceptable profiles.

Why Benchmark?

A benchmark enables a company to strive to be the best of the best. Thomas Benchmarking tells the directors of a business what makes their best people just that. Identifying the characteristics that make these people successful will enable you to recruit more of them. Business is tough and you cannot leave the recruitment of your top performers to chance.

Benchmarking can be used to:

- Improve communication
- Achieve sales objectives
- Promote creativity and innovation
- Develop a better understanding between team workers
- Encourage higher standards
- Motivate the workforce

How Does it Work?

A benchmark can be used to assess a

sample group of twenty or more people doing a similar job, up to a maximum of 132. The process involves PPA and TST assessment of each person within the sample with the results compared to actual performance.

As part of this process, the company itself needs to assess its organisational performance. It is up to the individual company to decide how it should do this but it should use areas with measured performance levels. These could include sales, the ability to achieve budgets and provide customer care and service, communication and leadership skills as well as activity levels.

The performance of each person in the sample is then ranked, based on the company's agreed parameters for organisational performance. Typically 25 per cent of the sample should be from the top performers (Top Performers), 50 per cent from the sample who rank between 25 and 75 in terms of performance (Fully Acceptable Performers) and 25 per cent from the lowest performers (Poor Performers).

Technical Resource Book

- confirms the PPA as a consistent and valid indicator of how people see themselves...

Since 1985 information has been collected and research conducted into the meaning and function of the PPA. To respond to frequently asked questions from organisations in the UK and across the world, Thomas wanted to address the technical issues of validity and reliability. To do this, data was needed that would address criticism based on the apparent simplicity of the PPA's content and its unique scoring procedure.



After almost two decades of work, Thomas has produced the Personal Profile Analysis Technical Resource Book. The Resource Book sets out the verifiable conclusions that have been drawn from the research and brings to end an era of misunderstanding and misconception.

The Resource Book is written in straightforward language so that it is accessible for readers who are not technical experts.

It confirms the PPA as a consistent and valid indicator of how people see themselves. It looks at the unique nature of the PPA, the attributes of personality testing and the value it brings to an organisation. It then goes on to look at the reliability and validity studies, the revalidation of the PPA research and its conclusions. It also provides proof that the PPA is completely consistent across all modes of delivery as well as language barriers.

The Resource Book has been sent to the BPS for inclusion in their next review. Chapters 1 and 10 are available free of charge for registered users of the Thomas web system at: www.thomasinternational.net. They can be found in the section entitled Validation and Management Documents.

The Technical Resource Book is available priced £175. For more details please contact your consultant.



New Version of Tests for Selection and Training: TST Version 2

The increasing need for businesses to be able to measure their people's 'mental horsepower' has led to an increased demand for TST. Its popularity and widespread use has increased the risk that people could be familiar with the questions when they take the tests. To maintain the tests' integrity and reliability, Thomas has developed new questions to ensure candidates have no prior familiarity with the tests. The methodology used has ensured that the new questions have no affect on validity.

TST has also been re-designed to include the Thomas logo and branding on the front cover, bringing it into line with the look and feel of the PPA form.

What is TST?

TST provides an extremely accurate means to measure the fluid intelligence or 'mental horsepower' of an individual. Fluid intelligence is the ability to reason on the spot and solve unfamiliar problems

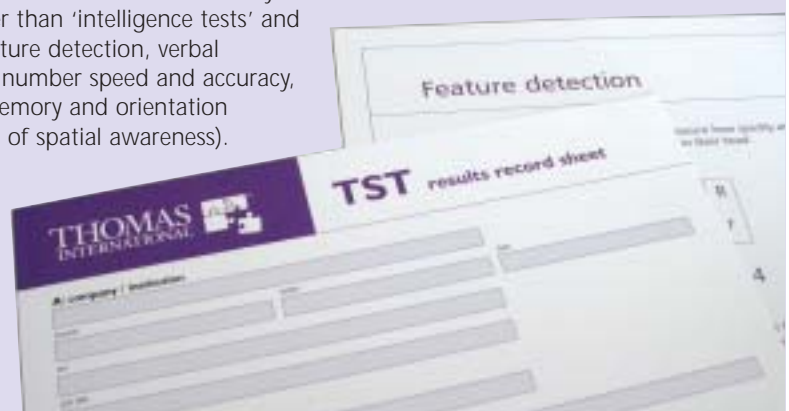
where there is no prior experience to call upon. Academic achievement, whilst undoubtedly playing a large part in selection decisions, is not a truly effective measure of a person's mental capacity or their ability to think on their feet. The tests provide a reliable, accurate and valid means of identifying if a person can learn and retain new skills and procedures.

TST uses five tests which are 'ability tests' rather than 'intelligence tests' and include feature detection, verbal reasoning, number speed and accuracy, working memory and orientation (a measure of spatial awareness).

Why Use TST?

TST can provide answers to questions such as;

- Can this person think on their feet?
- Can they cope with the mental demands of the job?
- Is this person a high flyer?
- How far can they be promoted?
- Is this person a strong problem solver?



Nigel Risner

Implementing strategies for success - why some companies succeed where others fail

Nigel Risner and his inspirational messages excite audiences throughout the world. He delivers over a hundred talks a year to corporations and associations such as The Academy for Chief Executives, The Institute of Directors, Royal Bank of Scotland, HSBC and Red Bull. Prior to motivating audiences, he ran a successful finance company, being one of the youngest CEO's in the City of London at 26 years old. He was the past president of the London Chapter of Professional Speakers Association, and in 2000 won Speaker of the Year as voted by 250 CEOs from the Academy for Chief Executives.

All businesses need a strategy to enable them to become successful. Business plans are essential but their financial focus can result in other non-financial strategies being sidelined. The business world moves at a frightening rate and to stay ahead of the game you need to be nimble on your feet and reactive to change. How you deal with change will ultimately determine how successful your business is. Implementing new strategies will enable you to develop and train your people and deliver a dramatic improvement in results.

This article explores three strategies that can help directors and managers effect real results.

Change is something even business leaders are uncomfortable with. They take the view that business has been conducted in a certain way in the past, it works, so why do anything different? Despite their professed resistance to change, conferences and training seminars still attract leaders in their droves, hoping to glean information that will make their business more profitable. At the conference they are filled with inspiration and enthusiasm but this rarely lasts beyond the end of the day.

Only 20 per cent of conference attendees apply the skills they have learnt when they return to the office. A staggering 80 per cent do nothing with their newfound knowledge. Why? One explanation is lack of time. Every day they face a mountain of post, emails and telephone messages. The other is that change is scary. New skills necessitate changes in their day-to-day work practice, which makes them feel uncomfortable. Leaders still fail to realise that to affect positive change they have to DO something about it.

"Implementing new strategies will enable you to develop and train your people and deliver a dramatic improvement in results"



"To be successful and to implement winning strategies, managers and directors need to move out of their comfort zone and adopt new techniques."

Their limiting beliefs prevent them from achieving great things. To be successful and to implement winning strategies they need to move out of their comfort zone and adopt some new techniques:

Take Risks

'If you couldn't fail what would you change?' Life and business is about taking risks. Identify where you have taken a risk in the past and realise that you are still alive. Fear of failure limits your chance of success. Taking a risk enables you to act on new ideas, information and innovations. Every company has a Business Prevention Officer chanting the mantra "this is the way it has always been and it works". Most of the time they are right but the BPO mindset means a company could get stuck doing the same things time and time again. This could result in new, and potentially successful ideas, being rejected.

Celebrate What Works

People frequently do not stop to celebrate what they have done right – they just focus on the next mountain to climb. Every business has a specific target it needs to reach but they need to take time to stop and reflect on their successes and congratulate themselves for it. In a tough market this is even more vital. Recognising and celebrating success boosts your people's morale.

Recognise Your Achievements

It is vital to acknowledge past achievements. We all remember our first driving lesson, we were confronted with three pedals and only two feet. It might have been a disaster, we may have stalled several times but in the end we passed our test. The same can be applied in business. Recognising these successes encourages us to stop listening to beliefs from the past that might limit our success in the future.

You may be thinking that even these three simple steps may seem too much to implement but all it takes is for you to do SOMETHING. The best illustration of this is a quote by the Right Reverend Robert Schuller "Yard by yard it's hard, inch by inch it's a cinch". Anyone can change any company when equipped with the right skills and vision. The three techniques above will help to equip you with the skills you need to implement successful business strategies.

Evolutionary Leadership

Brian Chernett has 25 years' experience as managing director and/or chairman of private and public companies including subsidiaries of Booker Bros McConnell and The Landmark Group. He is also an experienced NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) practitioner, which he applies to the business world. Dermot Fitzpatrick is director of Awareness Business Development, a company he created in 1995 to promote a new style of leadership in business. He has extensive management experience, gained in the hotel and leisure industry.

The challenge today's leaders face is how to lead an organisation in a world where the rules are constantly changing. New ways of doing business, emerging markets, new technology and changing customer expectations mean the traditional goal posts have moved. Many of the UK's chief executives and managing directors feel there is no time to stand back and think. This pressure has a dramatic impact on business. Industry consolidation and globalisation are trends that have created leaner organisations and driven the need for a new type of leadership. To succeed in this new environment, leaders must acquire a new perspective.

Evolutionary Leadership can be defined as creating a working environment that will bring out the best in people and empower teams to achieve their goals. It ensures an organisation is ahead of the game and 'fit' enough to adapt to change quickly and take advantage of new opportunities. It is not about discarding all knowledge, it is about refocusing and maximising existing skill sets.

"Evolutionary Leadership is about defining new ways of interacting with your staff, attracting and keeping the best people and tapping into the pool of talent within your organisation."

The Academy for Chief Executives provides CEOs and managing directors of UK organisations with an environment which 'inspires leaders to achieve their extraordinary potential, through the concept of leaders learning through leaders.' Assumptions are made about leadership, based on the way it has always been done in the past. Evolutionary Leadership challenges these preconceptions.

Brian Chernett, Executive Chairman, Academy for Chief Executives comments "Life can be very isolated as a chief executive. It is often difficult to talk openly and honestly to other directors about the real issues facing the business. Members of the board can give their advice and support but this will be coloured by their own agendas. If a CEO is having difficulty with the finance director, who do they turn to for help?"

Chernett continues "When you reach the position of managing director/chief executive you feel you have reached the top of the ladder. An enormous amount of effort has gone into this achievement and the price is often high. The Academy helps them explore what they would like to see happen, what they want to do differently and how to implement it."

Dermot Fitzpatrick, Group Chairman of ACE12, comments "Society has bought into a way of being in business that has

served its purpose. It is important to get the balance right and only by effecting change can you lead change. Evolutionary Leadership enables leaders to identify and explore what they want to see happening and equips them with the tools to achieve it."

Traditional leadership springs from a style of command and control. However, the multi layered complexity of a modern company means that leadership is increasingly a team role rather than an individual one. It is illogical for one individual to hold all the answers, let alone the right questions. Leaders still need to think about strategic direction but they also need to be able to facilitate the collective intelligence of an organisation as a resource for resolving its issues.

"Today's businesses require a style of leadership that creates 'organisational fitness'. A 'fit' organisation is one that can adapt successfully to change."

Chernett continues "Many things prevent leaders from reaching their full potential. They have certain limited beliefs - this is the way it has been done and the way it will always be done. There is a lack of understanding when it comes to implementing something different - the UK business community is not as open as it should be to change."

Evolutionary Leadership is about defining new ways of interacting with your staff, attracting and keeping the best people and tapping into the talent pool within your organisation. 'Command and Control' is no longer enough. Today's businesses require a style of leadership that creates 'organisational fitness'. A 'fit' organisation is one that can adapt successfully to change and unknown environments.

INSPIRES LEADERS
TO ACHIEVE THEIR
EXTRAORDINARY
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THROUGH THE
CONCEPT OF
LEADERS LEARNING
THROUGH LEADERS



THE ACADEMY FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Thomas International

in South Africa



Nelson Mandela's release from prison and his subsequent election as President heralded the start of a long overdue process of transformation for South African society. When the first democratically elected government took office in 1994 it inherited an economy that had experienced two decades of economic crises.

To avoid continued global marginalisation the main challenge the government faced was to place the economy on a new path of sustainable growth. For the country to be successful it needed to ensure that its business community had the right people in place to enable it to take full advantage of global competition. Years of subjective selection meant that people with potential had not been given a chance to shine. South African companies wanted to be able to identify new talent as well as uncover any potential stars already working for them. Business requirements went much further than simply recruitment. One of the key issues on the government's agenda was training and skills development. South African companies have a huge amount to contribute to the world marketplace but needed to discover where training was most needed.

Foreign investment was an important factor in re-structuring the economy. For the first time in decades South African business was opened up to international trade and competition. To compete effectively as well as attract new investment, companies needed to prove

they were equal to the task ahead. Businesses wanted to review the way they selected, developed, trained and managed their staff.

Against the backdrop of this economic climate, Thomas International offered a constructive solution. Thomas had been operating in South Africa since 1987 and had accumulated significant experience dealing with different behavioural styles at all levels within organisations. The Thomas team had already developed a detailed understanding of how to help companies objectively select and develop the right people for the right jobs irrespective of race, culture or socio-economic background.

Personal Profile Analysis (PPA)

A challenge when recruiting was the existence of diverse education systems across the country, making it difficult to assess different academic qualifications on a level playing field. This resulted in individuals being denied the opportunity to be successful.

Another challenge was how to manage people to ensure they were motivated and morale was maintained. As the work force became more diverse, managers needed to be able to understand their own management style and the impact they had on the people they managed.

Thomas' tools were able to help a number of South African companies with their selection, training and development needs. The system was used to demonstrate that an individual's performance in

a job is largely dependent upon his/her behavioural and cognitive suitability for it. The PPA illustrated that many of the issues faced by the business community were not caused by a lack of intelligence or ability, but the result of a misfit between the person and the job.

Test for Selection and Training (TST)

The South African government realised that to move into the 21st century the country had to invest in the training and development of its workforce. Legislation stated that organisations must invest, through a levy, in the development of their employees to skill-up the workforce and address the serious skills shortages that beleaguered the country. Tests for Selection and Training (TST) identified the potential learning ability of employees and how quickly they would pick up new skills.

TST enabled development programmes to be structured in a way that would enable people to learn in a format and at a rate that best suited them. TST also enabled companies to accurately predict the return on their investment in the training and development of people and the time frames needed for this to be achieved.

Thomas International assisted companies make more informed and objective decisions regarding the recruitment, selection and development of their people. Through this Thomas has been able to make a major contribution to the transformation and growth of the business community and South African society as a whole.

Ringrose Law Group

How Thomas helped successfully manage internal growth

The Ringrose Law Group was founded in May 1999 when Boston based Ringrose & Co merged with the Lincoln based Adie Pickwell. The group was completed with the addition of David Hitchcock & Co from Sleaford in the summer of 1999. The firm has now evolved into one of the leading providers of legal services in Lincolnshire, employing over 130 people.

The Group's greatest strength is its staff. It is accredited with Investors in People, a nationally recognised standard that highlights its commitment to the continual education, training and improvement of its staff.

It has experts that provide advice and help in areas such as criminal, family and commercial law, commercial and domestic conveyancing, civil litigation, wills and probate, immigration and personal injury. The Practice is currently working towards the Lexcel Law Society Quality Mark.

The Issue

Ringrose Law Group is one of the leading law firms in the area. The merger resulted in a substantial increase in employees, the headcount almost doubled, and the Group moved to new purpose built premises. The main issue was how to successfully manage the cultural change the merger presented - three different firms each with its own way of working and communicating.

For the Group to maintain its competitive edge and dominance in the market the integration of the different teams needed to be as seamless as possible. The merger also presented an opportunity to rationalise the services the firm offered to ensure they were operating as effectively as possible.

Ed Moss, CEO of the Ringrose Law Group comments "Cultural differences between each firm was a particular challenge to manage. We wanted to build on the strong reputation we had in the region and become more successful through ensuring that all the teams were able to work well together and communicate efficiently."

"I was very impressed with the results of the PPA, they were an extremely accurate reflection of people's work style"

The Solution

Ringrose Law Group used Thomas International's Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) and, in some circumstances the Human Job Analysis (HJA), to understand its staff better as part of its management process.

Ed Moss comments "I have to admit, at first I was sceptical that such a short test would tell me everything about the behavioural work style of an individual. However, I was extremely impressed with the results, they were a very accurate reflection of people's work style. As fee earners and partners were also quite sceptical I initially decided to adopt a non-confrontational approach to them by inviting them to complete a PPA on an optional basis. Once several people had been profiled word soon spread and I found requests to complete the PPA grew."

The Ringrose Law Group uses the PPA and HJA as part of the recruitment process.

"When recruiting a family lawyer, the HJA showed us that we needed to look for a non-confrontational person with good listening skills and a steady, empathetic approach. However the

qualities we look for in a litigator or personal injury lawyer are very different – they need to be more persuasive, tenacious and talkative. The HJA really enabled us to find the best fit possible for the job."

"One of the specific issues Thomas' systems helped address was "Is this person in the right job?" The Group had a three year qualified fee earner who specialised in personal injury. It became apparent that she felt frustrated by her role - she was not overly assertive and gave in easily when negotiating with the other side.

"She was extremely bright and we wanted to keep her within the Group so we needed to explore other options. She completed a PPA which highlighted some key things about her work style. After several discussions she transferred to domestic conveyancing and is now really enjoying her role. The massive benefit of the PPA is that it provides measurable objectivity – the profile speaks for itself."

"The massive benefit of the PPA is that it provides measurable objectivity - the profile speaks for itself"



Summary

Using the PPA and HJA as part of its recruitment, management and development programmes has enabled Ringrose Law Group to smoothly manage the growth of the firm and cultural change brought about by the merger.

"The merger was the step-up we needed to increase our physical presence in the market. It enabled us to double our size and has resulted in increased profitability and gross income. Integration was the key word but beyond the integration of the systems we wanted to ensure the cultural transition was as smooth as possible. We wanted our people to make a positive contribution to the business and to do this we needed to bring out the best in them and maximise their potential. Thomas' systems helped all staff in the Group to understand the way they and their team members worked, increased their self esteem and improved their confidence."

Win a night of luxury

at the exclusive **Danesfield House Hotel and Spa...**



Thomas International is constantly striving to provide you with the most comprehensive set of tools to enable you to understand and realise the potential of your people. To do this we need your help. Feedback plays an invaluable part in helping us continue to provide you with outstanding levels of service.

Filling out the questionnaire will give us feedback on how we are doing as a company whilst at the same time giving you an opportunity to win a night of luxury for two people at the exclusive Danesfield House Hotel and Spa.

Complete the questionnaire and fax back to Thomas International on 01628 524226 for your chance to be entered in the prize draw.

Name

Company

Telephone

Email

How long have you been a Thomas International customer?

Who is your local consultant?

How often do you see your consultant? (tick)

Monthly 1-3 Months 3-6 Months Over 6 Months

Which of Thomas International's solutions do you most commonly use? (tick)

PPA: online desktop

HJA: online desktop

TST Benchmarking

Team Audit Diagnostic Reviews PAC

What areas of your business do Thomas' tools help you with?

Recruitment & Selection

Appraisal

Team Development

Management Development

What prevents you from using our other reports and services?

Danesfield House Hotel and Spa is a picturesque country house hotel set within 65 acres of magnificent estate grounds. The hotel is situated high in the Chiltern Hills, overlooking the River Thames and between the attractive riverside towns of Marlow and Henley-on-Thames. The hotel was converted in 1991 from a country mansion house built in the Victorian era.

The Danesfield Spa offers a wide range of fitness facilities such as an indoor pool, tennis courts and jogging trail. The spa offers an oasis of elegance and calm - an ideal opportunity to escape from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

Do you know what your staff turnover costs you each year? What objective assessments do you have in place to measure this?

Do you use any other competitor's systems? If so, which ones and for what purpose?

How could we incentivise you to recommend us to other companies?

Are there any other HR solutions or services that you would like us to offer in the future?

Are there any companies which you think would benefit from using Thomas' tools?

name tel

name tel

name tel

What do you see Thomas delivering to you as a client?

Terms and conditions 1) Prize consists of one night of accommodation. Does not include travel, food, drinks and any additional expenses. 2) The competition is open to UK mainland residents only. 3) The prize must be taken between Oct 2003 and March 2004. 4) All completed questionnaires will be classed as entry forms. 5) All forms should be sent by fax to 01628 524 226. 6) All winners will be notified by post by 30 September 2003. 7) Judges decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. 8) No alternatives or cash prizes are available. 9) Closing date for all entries is 1st September 2003. 10) Promoters are Thomas International, Harris House, 17 West Street, Marlow, Bucks SL7 2LS.

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