



P3 - Online profiling

The benefits of profiling using the web based system.



P5 - Berry talks

People buy from people with whom they have great relationships

Thomas *news*

Issue 6
Summer 2004

Celebrating excellence at the Recruiter Awards 2004



The third annual Recruiter Awards took place in front of a packed house at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane and Thomas was headline sponsor. The overall Gold Winner was transport staffing recruitment firm Agency Drivers Register. This award recognised and rewarded ADR's innovative approach to business, its people's drive and their outstanding success in fulfilling client's needs profitably. The event brought together over 750 recruiters and their guests and was an opportunity to showcase the tremendous diversity of the recruitment industry.

The recruitment industry plays an integral part in the UK's economy and is worth approximately £23 billion each year. Martin Reed, chief executive of Thomas International, comments "Recruiting the right person to the right job is fundamental. Getting it wrong will cost your business money, as much as 2.5 times a person's salary. Profiling plays a vital part in ensuring an organisation understands the behavioural characteristic required for a role, the behavioural style of the candidate and the match needed between the two."

See page 2 for full story

TST is being updated

TST (Test for Selection and Training) is being updated as part of Thomas' commitment to ongoing product development. We want to provide you with the best strategic business tools that will deliver maximum value to your organisation. We explain on page 2 how the tests will change and what benefits this will bring to your organisation.

See page 2 for full story



inside this issue

▶ TST a further explanation	2
▶ Benefits of profiling on the web	3
▶ Ian Florance: Creativity in business	5
▶ Building high performance sales teams	6
▶ Case study: Weston Manor Hotel	7
▶ £150 WORTH OF VOUCHERS	8

Martin Reed

CEO Thomas International

The first half of the year has seen some fantastic growth for Thomas UK and International. This is due mainly to the support you, as clients, have given us. We have seen some fundamental changes to Thomas Key, with the introduction of the new Job Profiling tool as well as the ability to sift and select the suitability of people to jobs. Thomas is helping the industry with its ongoing support of the BTPA, which is committed to raising the standards of testing. We continually strive to be ahead of the market so that we can anticipate and deliver on your business requirements.

Thomas has a strong set of core values outlining how we behave in our dealings with clients as well as each other. We are passionate about customer service which is why we want your opinions for our survey on page 8.

As usual, the newsletter contains articles that we hope you will find interesting and informative. Simon Berry, director of Results in Business, gives an insight into how segmentation can improve the profitability of your business. On page 6 Ian Florance examines the role creativity plays in a commercial environment. We also have two examples of how two very different industries, hotel and office products, are using Thomas to positively impact their business.

Updating TST

(Tests for Selection and Training)



As part of our ongoing product development the design of TST will be updated as well as some of the test descriptions. Some of the changes that will be made include Feature Detection becoming known as Perceptual Speed and Orientation changing to Spatial Visualisation. The test descriptions will also be up-dated to reflect more accurately what the tests can do. The prompt cards will also be improved to make TST much easier to administer.



We will also be updating the TST training course to reflect recommendations from the British Psychological Society (BPS). These changes will be implemented towards the latter part of the year and will provide users with much more in-depth training helping them to be more confident and competent in their use of TST.

Thomas will also be creating a single UK norm group for TSTs to reflect current UK ability levels. Your consultant will be able to take you through all the changes and how these impact the tests.

Good team work is key to success of *Recruiter Gold Award Winner*



ADR Group, a specialist in transport staffing recruitment, not only won the Best Industrial/Technical Recruitment Firm Award they also picked up the overall Gold Award. The Gold Award recognised and rewarded ADR's innovative approach to business, its people's drive and their outstanding success in fulfilling clients' needs profitably. "Winning the Gold award has given everyone a tremendous boost," says Emma Guyton, managing director of ADR. "We are proud of the business we have built and the reputation we have earned within our sector as an innovator who delivers a reliable service so it's fantastic that the judges acknowledged this."

To assess the key elements of Guyton's winning team, Thomas carried out a Team Audit. It allows an organisation to identify the ideal team culture, assess the actual team members and provide a gap analysis in terms of their behavioural and role shortfall. It also assesses every team member's compatibility and strengths against both the actual and ideal team culture. An audit lets an organisation predict a team's reaction to change and allows it to plan.

Guyton explains that effective teamwork has been a vital element in ADR's success. "ADR is a fast paced, dynamic business which needs to constantly grow and

evolve to ensure we achieve our ambition of becoming the market leading brand for driver recruitment. A competitive market, challenging targets and tight timescales means that our teams really do have to deliver on their objectives."

"As a team we are driven, determined and extremely hard working. We are results orientated and have the ability to achieve a lot in a short space of time.

"The audit reinforced that we need to be a direct, decisive team with lots of energy and enthusiasm, combined with the ability to achieve results through people. As we move forward each key team member will have a full explanation of what the ideal team behavioural profile is and how they individually need to adapt. If as a team we understand what the ideal is we are more than half way there."

"The PPA is an extremely accurate indicator of how people will behave in the work environment, it has added 'science' to our recruitment process. We now have a very clear understanding of what behaviours work well in our organisation. For example, our consultants need to be sales focused and capable of influencing people so it is important to seek personalities who are naturally suited to that. When you are growing quickly, like ADR, with tough targets to meet, its vital to get the people bit right!"

Benefits of Profiling using the web based system



Thomas International's web based system delivers profiles and reports direct to you via your web browsers.

- Reports can be produced in any language
- Full range of PPA reports available which can be emailed directly to the candidate/employee
- You can access the web system from any workstation.
- Invitations to complete a profile can be emailed directly to the candidate eliminating delay in sending out the PPA and receiving responses.

The Internet is a remarkably effective and efficient channel for profiling individuals. The two main benefits to completing these assessments online is location and access. As long as you have access to a web browser the assessment can be administered from anywhere. This freedom of access is vital if you are mobile or have different sites across the country. The HR department could be in London with the staff they want to profile based in Manchester. Administering the assessments remotely saves time and expense in travel and/or communication costs.

Empirical results have proven that testing online is as valid as paper and pencil (PPA Technical Resource Book.) It provides complete flexibility and mobility whilst preserving the validity of the instrument. The Thomas website is updated continuously so enhancements are

available to all users immediately without the delay implicit in the distribution of desk top software.

Using the web system also opens up the information derived from the assessments to more people within the company; you are not restricted to one desktop.

How to set up a web account

This is a straightforward process. Firstly contact your consultant. He/she will take you through the form you need to complete in order to set up a web account. We just need your company details and a valid email address. Once these forms have been submitted a web account can then be set up. To transfer your data from Thomas Key click on the Toolbox icon in Thomas Shell. On the next screen that comes up click on Toolbox, then Export TKey Data and follow the step-by-step instructions.

Accessibility is one of the key benefits and more than one person could have access to the Thomas data in the web account. The account can be monitored by the Administrator who can set up Sub-administrator access. For example, an HR Director could be the Administrator and the HR Managers and Personnel Officers in the department could be the Sub-administrators. The Administrator can control how much information the Sub-administrators have access to. The Administrator also has control of unit distribution.

"One of the things that really impresses us about Thomas is the ability to complete the PPA online, in any language, from anywhere in the world. When I travel overseas to interview candidates, the web based system means that I don't have to carry large amounts of paperwork. Candidates can be profiled in situ with the results emailed directly back to us from Thomas"

Gill Greenwood HR Director,
Game Workshop

People buy from people

by Simon Berry



Simon Berry is a director of Results in Business Ltd which works with companies in the areas of managing growth, managing change, and improving business performance. Simon has just recently been trained to use the Thomas tools. He has been consulting and training for the past six years. Previous to this he was director of business reengineering for NCR. Results in Business Ltd help

companies to focus their organisational resources, build and deploy effective processes and get commitment from their people to ensure business success. They have clients of all sizes and across many industries and include Sola Optical, Sterling Commerce, RS Components, Ace Insurance, Bookham Technology and Carrwood Homes.

For most companies the potential client list is quite wide. They are scared to bracket themselves to one specialist area in case they miss out on business opportunities. Their mind set is locked into 'market size' when they really need to ask themselves what their market share is and what they want it to be. Is it better to have a 10 per cent share of a £100 million market or 1 per cent of a £500 million market. In revenue terms the answer is obvious, but when you consider the reduction in marketing costs that focus brings, then the profitability improvement is even more compelling.

To maximise the performance of your business and increase sales and turnover you need to focus clearly on who it is you want to target. Who you are most able to help, therefore most likely to do business with.

People buy from people with whom they have great relationships. They buy from people who speak the same language as them, who they trust, who are competent, supportive and interested in what they do. Above all they buy from people who help them resolve their issues. It can be distilled down to the 'Three C's' – credibility, competence and compatibility.

Credibility - Are you capable, confident and committed to delivering on your commitments?

Competence – Do you have a track record in the sector you are targeting? Are you able to ask the right questions to really understand your client's needs?

Compatibility – Are you interested in helping them address their issues rather than simply achieving your own goals?
Do you understand their culture and are you able to adapt your behaviour to fit in with them?

Segmenting the market enables you to focus on an area where you have the experience to deal with their needs and you speak their language.

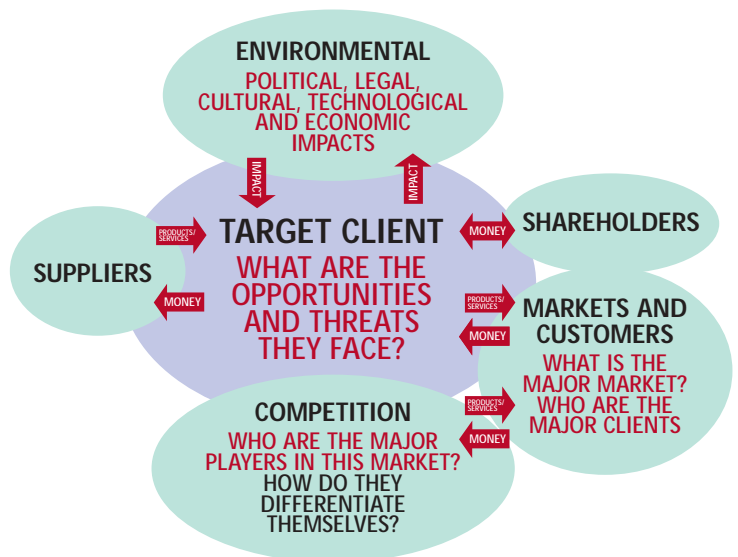
Segmentation can be done in several ways e.g. geography or size of organisation. However two of the best ways to achieve results is to segment by industry or by identifying a specific common problem across industries that you can solve. By dividing the market up into smaller, more manageable chunks, it will give you a much better understanding of the world your customer inhabits. Clients

want their adviser/consultant/supplier to be a specialist in their chosen field. This is not to say you cannot be opportunistic, you can, but don't make this the sole focus of your efforts.

Start by asking where you have had success in the past: which sectors have been more responsive than others? Which companies are experiencing problems you can help with? You then need to think who it is within these organisations you must speak to. Who do these problems 'keep awake' at night? Is it the managing director, sales director or HR director?

Once you have identified these you can then take a look inside their world, understand them better and sell to them more effectively. This diagram can be used as a template to 'step into their shoes'.

TARGET MARKET 'WORLD MAP'



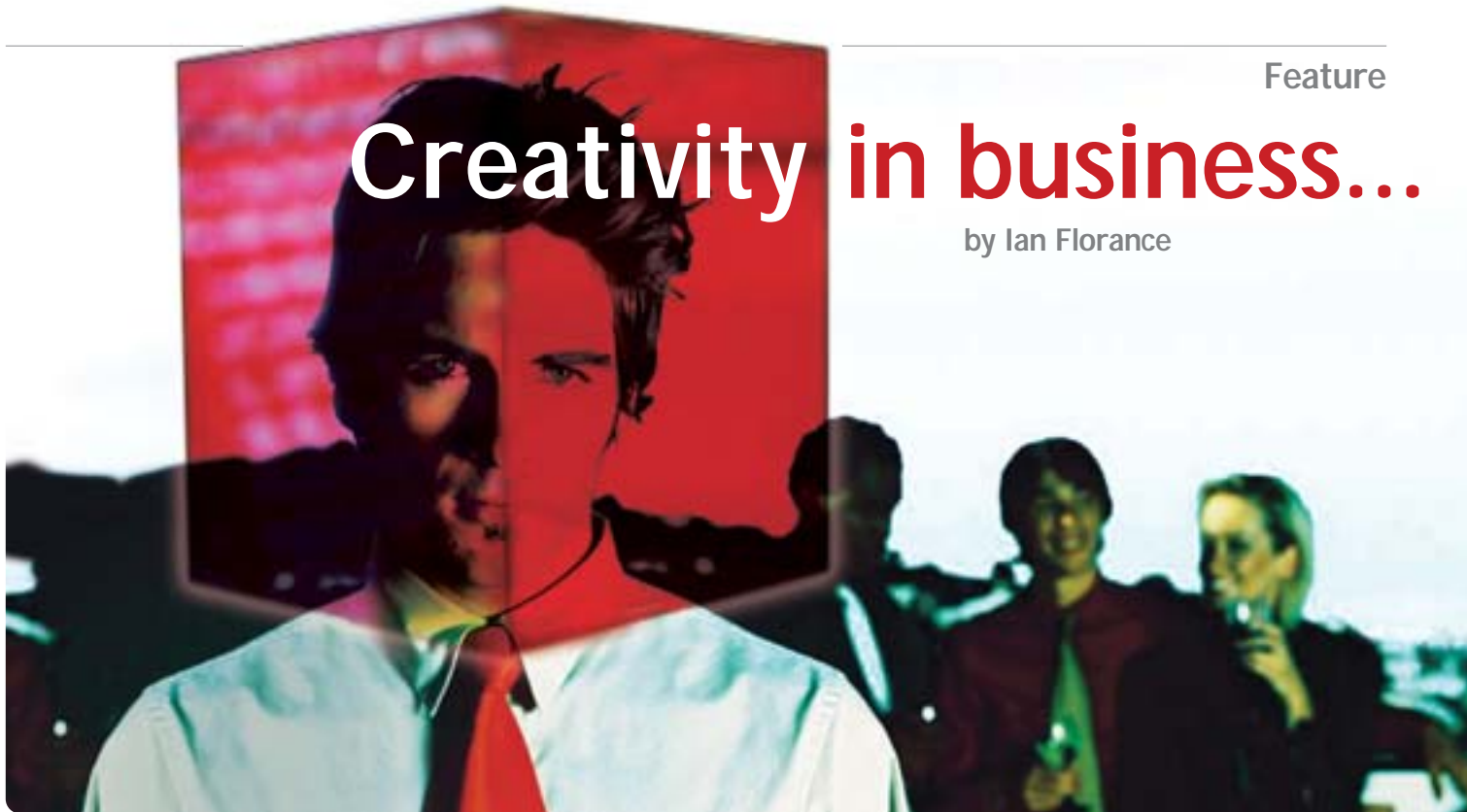
For each of the areas (Environmental, Shareholders, Markets and Customers etc..) you need to ask what are the opportunities and threats that your target faces in relation to each of these. What are the expectations of their shareholders – do they want long or short term gain? What is their market and who are their customers? Who are they competing against and how are they differentiating themselves?

This map gives you a vehicle to talk to your prospective clients in a language they will understand. It gives you a Value Proposition – “based on our knowledge and experience in (doing what you do uniquely) we have the ability to (contribute a specific thing) resulting in (the particular type of business improvement) for (a specific type of client)”.

The Value Proposition demonstrates that you think and care about their world, their problems and their issues. You understand them so are able to provide a solution that will perfectly meet their needs. People buy from people with whom they have a great relationship and this model gives you a structure to create this relationship and subsequent business success.

Creativity in business...

by Ian Florance



Ian Florance is the managing director of Only Connect. With over 25 years experience in the area of human potential, Ian works with a number of organisations, offering experience and expertise in business management, marketing, publishing, public relations, communication and human psychology. This article examines what creativity in business is, how it is done and the benefits it brings to a business.

What is creativity? Creativity can be used to solve business problems, tackle issues in a fresh way, generate new ideas as well as inventing and developing new products/services. It's not just a 'nice-to-have' in today's cut throat business environment - it can be a matter of survival. One of the first myths to dispel is that creativity in business differs from the creative process used in art - it doesn't. The same techniques can be applied to solve commercial problems as to write a poem or create a scientific theory. Everyone has the capacity to be creative, but some people are better at it than others. The most important personality factor in creative excellence is a tendency not to follow external rules but to be open to new experiences. There is no generally recognised test for creativity but you see in different personality types those who are more open to new ideas than others. A culture that combines trust and communication will give ideas a chance to blossom.

Creativity in business can take several forms - putting two things together and realising a third, looking at a subject in a way that has not been investigated before or completely transforming a subject (a paradigm shift). Of course, it is possible to be creative in a trivial way; anyone can create a poem by writing down a few random words. However, creative ideas can be extremely valuable to a business if they are properly evaluated and the valuable ones are applied. They can be applied in any aspect of your business from systems and processes to how you deal with your customers and even how you manage your people. Evaluation of any creative output is key. If a business is to do with rules, procedures and control (such as industries working in a highly legislated environment) then creative ideas need to be carefully evaluated to ensure there are no legislative implications. However, if it is a new technology business then creativity could sit at its heart.

Why is creativity important in a business environment?

Most organisations operate in a packed market with their competitors offering the same or similar products and services. Creative thinking enables a business to come up with completely

original ideas that will deliver a powerful competitive advantage. It is no longer enough to rely on product development or technology to gain competitive advantage. Companies need to differentiate themselves by two ways:

- People - delivering customer service. Companies that get this right are successful.
- Original ideas - innovations such as the Walkman and iPod have revolutionised their market segments.

How does a company become more creative? There are four very clear stages in the creativity process - Preparation, Rumination, Illumination and Evaluation. A brainstorm is a well known technique to short cut this process. However, to ensure it delivers an effective result the brainstorm needs to be conducted in a very specific way. It is extremely important there is no criticism of ideas during the generation phase. Some may be quite ludicrous but one might prove to be invaluable. Using an external facilitator will provide a measure of objectivity to the session and ensure that it will be productive. What you do with the information that comes out of the brainstorm is just as important. A method of evaluation must be chosen before the session begins - what will you do with the ideas that are produced? How will you decide which ones will be valuable to the business or not? You must also make it clear to the participants that the results and outcome will be fed back to them.

Another way to think creatively is the use of analogy. This allows you to step outside the constraints of the problem you are trying to solve. For example, if you need to send a rocket to the moon a good analogy to use would be a journey to Leeds and back. It is the journey to Leeds that you would discuss. What do we have to think about to complete the journey? Do we have enough fuel? Do we have sufficient food and if not where will we get more from? What happens if we're stranded there? Use of an analogy moves people onto neutral territory and gets them to think about the problem itself rather than demonstrating how knowledgeable they are about the business.

New ideas and creative thinking can challenge the status quo but they can also transform a business in a way that rational planning cannot. Everyone has the capacity to think creatively, it's just a matter of tapping into that facility. An open and honest culture will provide the backdrop for people to express themselves creatively. Some ideas won't work, but some will. A company that is prepared to embrace new ideas and concepts could see a huge return in the form of competitive advantage and market share.

Building high performance sales teams

Guilbert Office Depot is the UK's leading office products company. Its customer base includes many well known UK companies operating across all market sectors as well as central and local government, utilities, educational institutions and the National Health.

With distribution and sales centres across the UK and Ireland, Guilbert deliver outstanding customer service wherever a customer is based. Their catalogue contains over 7000 products from desktop stationery to computer consumables, new technology equipment, business machines and furniture - everything for an office ready for next day delivery.

Guilbert customers also have exclusive access to the Niceday brand which consists of over 2000 products covering all the essentials that make office life easier and more efficient. Guilbert are also able to offer electronic trading – online ordering channels and purchase card ability are specifically designed to make managing office supplies even more effective.

"I wanted to understand my team: what was working, what wasn't and look for ways to motivate and encourage them"

The Challenge

Deborah Nethercoat, Head of Retail and Leisure Sales at Guilbert Office Depot outlines the issue that faced her sales team:

"Our sales team was comprised of people with varying abilities and experience. They were doing a good job but we needed to think outside the box and raise the bar. Guilbert had traditionally offered clients a comprehensive range of office products but we had developed an enhanced offering which included procurement as well as logistics. This enabled us to extend our offering beyond simply office products to carrier bags, hangers, etc. It meant that the team had to think outside the traditional stationery box to talk to a wider range of contacts."

"We are set targets as a team, rather than individually. To exceed these targets it was essential the team dynamics were right. I wanted to understand my team: what was working, what wasn't and look for ways to motivate and encourage them. As a team I felt we had huge potential and I wanted to make the most of this."

The sales team completed a Sales Diagnostic Review. As part of this process each member of the team was profiled using Thomas' Personal Profile Analysis (PPA). The Diagnostic is a one day work-

"We looked at each individual's skills and strengths; who had drive, who was good at seeing projects through to the finish, who communicated well at all levels?"

shop where a team can address problems by talking about the issues affecting them in an open and honest environment.

The PPA assesses an individual's behaviour in the work environment. It can answer questions such as – What are their strengths and limitations? Are they self starters? How do they communicate? What motivates them? The PPA enables people to become more self aware, which in turn gives them the means to consolidate their working strengths and compensate for their limitations.

The PPA is a series of 24 questions on a forced choice "first impressions" basis, taking no longer than seven minutes to complete. The answers are charted on a graph under the four headings of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance (DISC).

"From this we were able to see the actual profile of the team and then identify where we wanted to be in terms of ideal culture. We looked at each individual's skills and

strengths; who had drive, who was good at seeing projects through to the finish, who communicated well at all levels?"

The Results

The Diagnostic Review enabled the team to identify the role each individual played within it. Some people's strengths lay in the support and service they delivered to their clients. Others were strong "hunters", comfortable concentrating solely on new business.

"It is a significant feat for a team of 17 people to all get on so well but everyone does. They understand and appreciate their colleagues so much better. I recently completed a series of one-to-one meetings with each person and asked them what, if anything, they would change. They all replied that there was nothing they would change, which was a real vindication of how the diagnostic had helped us re-structure the team. Each person feels valued and confidence has soared. We now have a team that works extremely well together and delivers outstanding results."

Results following Sales Diagnostic Review:

- £7 million pounds worth of business from major retailers such as Arcadia, Game Group, First Choice and Stead and Simpson
- Increased our business by 40 per cent. Year ending 2003 we completed just over £35 million worth of business compared to £25 million in 2002
- Incremental business with existing clients grew from £300,000 to £5.3 million as a result of ensuring right people were in charge of these accounts
- Doubled the number of fixed contracts awarded by clients
- Negotiated an increase in the team's commission with the Board of Directors which has further motivated the team to succeed.

Outstanding levels of customer service *through effective team work*



“Profiling people enabled them to understand how they preferred to work but more importantly how their colleagues worked. They understood one another’s roles much better and the part they played in the team”

ourselves on delivering outstanding levels of service and to achieve this we all need to work in harmony. Weston Manor is an intimate, luxury hotel where discreet, friendly and attentive service is everything. Good team work

Weston Manor Hotel is an 11th century country house hotel in Oxfordshire. The historic building and surroundings are used as a venue for residential conferences, meetings, weddings, private functions and special occasions.

At the heart of the main building is the Baronial Hall which was originally the bailiff’s court for the Abbott of Osney who owned the house before the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1539. It was subsequently then owned by the Earls of Abingdon and Berkshire, until 1917.

Renovated during the twenties and thirties, Weston Manor was occupied during the Second World War when it was used by the BBC as a dormitory for their staff. The building was converted into a hotel in the early 50’s, and bought by its present owners, the Osborn family in 1983. The hotel has 32 full time and 10 part time members of staff across five departments – Kitchen, Restaurant, Sales/Banqueting, House Keeping and Reception.

“Weston Manor is an intimate, luxury hotel where discreet, friendly and attentive service is everything. To achieve this all the staff need to work as a team - any conflict would be an anathema”

Dudley Osborn, owner of Weston Manor commented “Happy and motivated staff are vital to the success of the hotel and low turnover plays a huge part in this. We have many regular guests - companies as well as individuals. Consistency of staff means these guests see regular, friendly faces and the hotel becomes a familiar environment.”

“The hotel industry has become fiercely competitive. More choice of accommodation means guest expectations are high. We pride

is paramount - conflict would be an anathema. Profiling people enabled them to understand how they preferred to work but more importantly how their colleagues worked. They understood one another’s roles much better and the part each plays in the team.”

“For example, strong team leadership is needed in a busy kitchen such as ours. We are a popular choice as a wedding venue and each weekend from April to October the hotel is booked exclusively for weddings. A typical wedding involves large numbers of guests at a single sitting and delivering outstanding food means the kitchen team must work seamlessly. The PPA identified that the Head of Kitchen needed to give stronger leadership and direction to his team to maximise their performance and we were able to address this through training.”

Neil John, Hotel Manager comments “We also wanted to be more effective when carrying out appraisals on our staff. All too often this is an unstructured chat starting with a vague question along the lines of “So, how are you doing...” An appraisal must be a way to see how the behavioural and skill requirements of the job are being fulfilled by the individual and if any training is needed.”

“I think the key difference the PPA has made to our appraisal process is that people open up much more. The profile is used as a discussion point from which you can agree a way forward. It meant we could ask better, more detailed questions. The profile also showed us what training was needed in order to fill any gaps. We could objectively see their strengths and limitations. The great thing about PPA is that they have filled the form in themselves, this is how they see themselves rather than how we think they are.”

“Because we have taken the time to invest in tools such as Thomas we know and understand our staff much better and they in turn understand their colleagues. This is reflected in our staff turnover, which is minimal. Weston Manor is a great place to work!”

£100 training voucher

To set-off against a training course of your choice!

As part of this summer's newsletter we are offering a £100 training voucher to set off against any training course of your choice* booked before the end of August 2004. To book a place, call Claire Chandler on 01628 475 366 quoting reference: SNL04.

Training Courses Available:

PPA Practitioner Level 1
PPA Advanced Practitioner Level 2
TST (Tests for Selection and Training)
Interview Skills
Self Awareness

Appraisal Skills
Negotiation Skills
Leadership
Goal Setting and Achieving Objectives
Communication
Motivation

SURVEY - COMPLETE TO CLAIM A FURTHER £50 TRAINING VOUCHER *

We want to ensure that our systems, assessments, tests and training give you the means to realise the potential of your people. Filling out the Survey will give us valuable feedback on how we are doing as a company whilst at the same time giving you the opportunity to win a further voucher worth £50 to set off against any training course of your choice booked by the end of August 2004. *One voucher per company.

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

Name: _____

Company: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Who is your local consultant? _____

What are the top five things you like about trading with a business like ours?

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

- Recruitment and selection
 Appraisal
 Team Development
 Management development
 Sales teams
 Training

Do you feel you have enough contact with Thomas (either via email updates or the Newsletters) outside of consultant's regular visits?

- yes no

Which of Thomas International's solutions do you use?

- PPA TST HJA/Job Profiling
 Benchmarking Team Audit
 Diagnostic Reviews PAC

Which three PPA reports do you most commonly use?

- 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

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 tests and assessments from other providers? If so, which ones?

How do you rate our products and services to our competitors?

Do you know of any companies who would benefit from using Thomas' tools?
Company: _____

Contact name: _____

Tel: _____

Company: _____

Contact name _____

Tel: _____

Company: _____

What is the main benefit you see Thomas delivering to you as a client?

How could Thomas be of further assistance to you?

THOMAS
INTERNATIONAL 

contact Thomas International on 01628 475366