

ENGAGING AND DEVELOPING OUR EMPLOYEES

Ensuring we engage, develop and retain our talented employees is a fundamental aspect to the success of our business, and one which has yet again been externally recognised in Management Today's 2015 Britain's Most Admired Companies awards. We were ranked 1st in the property sector for our 'ability to attract, develop and retain top talent', as well as being ranked 1st overall in the property sector and 3rd in the awards overall.

However, it is important that we continue to create an environment where all our employees can reach their full potential and deliver outstanding performance not only for themselves but also our shareholders and the communities in which we operate. We achieve this through our continued focus on talent development and performance management – holding six-monthly reviews and regular open discussions to highlight any training requirements, future objectives and aspirations. To support this process all appraising managers attended refresher training on coaching skills which ensures a consistent approach across all departments. In addition, each department head received in-depth 360°

feedback which was extremely constructive and supported the formulation of their development plans and wider team objectives for 2016.

We also continue to offer a range of internal and external personal development opportunities and invested £53,500 in staff training, conferences, professional qualifications and 1:1 coaching.

During 2015 we refreshed and re-launched our employee handbook which sets out our expected standards and how we support our employees. This included a number of additions and updates to reflect the latest legislation, new risk management approaches and the security of business information.

Set out below are some highlights showcasing some of our work during 2015.

Performance

Conducted our first company-wide employee survey

239 hours of employee voluntary work undertaken

Three mentoring placements provided



Focus: Employee survey

In order to understand the collective voice of our business, we commissioned and launched our first company-wide employee survey – ‘Developing Our Future’. This presented us with the opportunity to garner feedback across a wide range of subjects through a third party, confidential, online survey. Areas covered included questions on training and development, collaboration, leadership and salary/benefits.

We received an excellent response rate with 96% of employees responding. Of those respondents 100% said they were ‘proud to work for Derwent London’ and agreed that ‘Derwent London is a great place to work’. 96% of respondents felt ‘satisfied with their job’ and 81% ‘seeing their long term career’ with the Company.

We also asked respondents to pick the words which they thought best described the company culture. **Professional**, **progressive** and **passionate** were the top three words selected, very closely followed by **creative** and **focused**. Coupling these with our consultative leadership style and commerciality, we believe these values help define the ongoing success of our business.

Having now absorbed the results of the survey, the Board has committed to a number of initiatives to build on the positive aspects and also pro-actively address the aspects which need further investigation. In addition, the Board felt it was important that the results were presented transparently to everyone in the Company. Therefore, a dedicated feedback session was delivered by Chief Executive Officer, John Burns, Head of HR, Katy Levine and members of the Executive Committee to present the findings and explain how the opportunities would be taken forward.

“By working hard and accepting more responsibility, you are given the opportunity to grow and develop your career within the Company. The working environment is progressive and challenging which keeps working life interesting and engaging.”

“Everyone is recognised as making a valuable contribution to the success of the Company.”

“Being part of an innovative, passionate company and working with colleagues and professional teams of the highest calibre”

Head of HR, Katy Levine and Payroll/HR Manager, Carole Freeman

Focus: Mentoring

Working for the third year in succession with Fitzrovia Youth in Action/Westminster Kingsway College and their hugely successful In-Sight programme, we again offered mentoring placements in our business for those looking to understand more about the property industry. Similar to last year our Head of Tax, David Westgate again took up the mentoring role with two mentees – Shayreif Blake and Nghiem Tran. In addition Senior Asset Manager, Charmaine Rees became a mentor for the first time, and was matched with Zahra Syed.

All three students undertook a week long intensive placement with David and Charmaine, working in their respective areas of the business and getting a true perspective of what life is like in the property industry, and receiving invaluable one-to-one mentor support. Below we catch up with Zahra and Charmaine to find out how they got on.

Zahra

"Last summer I was fortunate enough to be invited onto a one week work experience placement at Derwent London. I was quite excited about the opportunity as I previously took part in their careers' workshop where I got to question Derwent London staff member's. Some of their advice I still remember to this day; I knew that I surely would learn something new. Honestly, I did not know much, if anything about real estate, property, leasing etc. before starting my work experience. Although after this experience it definitely broadened my horizons, which for me personally is the most important achievement. I got an insight into Derwent's property portfolio, where I could see their work in action, such as the Angel Building, 1 and 2 Stephen Street and amazing new projects such as the White Collar Factory. During my time in the office I had the chance to attend meetings and see people pitch projects, which was really interesting and insightful. I definitely felt very welcomed by everyone; whenever I had questions or didn't quite understand what was going on everybody was ready to explain it to me, especially my mentor for the week, Charmaine, who made sure I gained the most out of this experience!"

Charmaine

"I was delighted to be part of the Fitzrovia Youth in Action mentoring programme. As a young person, it can seem like there is a large step between school and the world of work, and the mentoring programme assists in bridging this gap. When organising work experience for Zahra, it was important to me to ensure the week provided an opportunity to understand not only my role, and what I do day-to-day, but also the role of different departments and how they inter-relate to make Derwent London a successful business. It was great to show Zahra our property portfolio and I think she gained a valuable insight into how enjoyable it is working in the property industry.

It was great to be able to discuss my career to date with Zahra and hear her thoughts on how she would like to progress in the near future and how I could support that.

Overall it was a really enjoyable worthwhile week."



**Fitzrovia Youth
in Action**



Focus: Skills and training – apprenticeships

Following on from appointing our first apprentice back in 2013 – Maruf Miah at the Angel Building we return to find out how Maruf got on, where he is today and what life is like for him now. In an interview with Head of Sustainability, John Davies, Maruf talks about his journey and what the future holds.

What happened at the end of your apprenticeship?

Towards the end of my two year apprenticeship, I was offered a permanent position with Derwent London as a mobile building manager, looking after a number of small buildings in the Fitzrovia portfolio. I was surprised and delighted to have my hard work acknowledged, and for this to allow me to progress from the role of apprentice.

Did you ever think that you would end up working as a building manager?

I didn't expect myself to be acknowledged or progress towards being a building manager that fast. However, whilst working with Graham and the team at Angel I always kept in mind to work my hardest and do my best in order to progress. Although I say that I did not expect to be working as a building manager so fast, as soon as I had started to work for Derwent London, I was aware of what my goal was and I worked extremely hard to attain it. So I suppose it goes to show that if you put your mind to something you can make it happen.

So what do you do now? Has your role changed?

My role has changed significantly since becoming a fully-fledged building manager. I have more responsibilities to deal with. For example, I now look after a number of properties, which means I have to deal with more tenants more regularly. They are all different and I am the one they pick up the phone to if they need assistance. So compared to my previous role it is a lot, lot bigger.

What aspects do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy working in the vibrant environment with lots of different people who do different roles from me. I enjoy being part of a team member as well as having my own individual responsibilities. I also enjoy the fact that my job role is so varied. I spend time working in the office, visiting my buildings and meeting tenants to ensure that they are happy and that everything is operating efficiently and as it should be.

Is life different for you now?

Extremely different – but in a much more positive way. Considering where I come from, what I have achieved and how I am doing in my life, I am really proud of where I am now. My job helps me feel positive in the morning as I prepare to get to work.

I have a job which I am very proud of and have made great strides in my personal and professional development. My hard work is paying off.

So where would you like to be 5 years from now?

In five years' time I would like to see myself as having progressed further in my job, and moving on from being a mobile building manager to a facilities manager. This involves even more technical expertise in knowing how to look after buildings but also even more managerial skills which I am learning more of at the moment. I hope to gain as much professional experience and knowledge as I can within the field – I want to be the best I can be.

Prior to joining the wider building management team Maruf was shortlisted in the 2015 City Gateway apprentice awards and subsequently won the blue riband 'outstanding achievement by an apprentice' award – a fitting accolade to his hard work.

“I was surprised and delighted to have my hard work acknowledged, and for this to allow me to progress from the role of apprentice.”

