

CASE STUDY

THEME: OUTSOURCED HR SUPPORT



RWARMSTRONG

MEET RW ARMSTRONG & LEARN ABOUT **THE CHALLENGE** THEY FACED WITH THEIR HR

R W Armstrong is based in Hampshire and provides high-quality construction services across the South East of England. This traditional residential building firm has an excellent reputation for their fine craftsmanship and specialises in high-class refurbishments and renovations of country homes, period town houses, and listed properties as well as the construction of bespoke new houses for private clients.

Founded 60 years ago, the workforce of this successful business comprises craftsmen coordinated by IOB qualified contracts managers and experienced site managers, reinforced with specialists and sub-contractors.

When the internal HR Manager left the business, R W Armstrong found themselves in urgent need of external HR support to keep their prestigious business operating as usual. The multifarious structure of their organisation meant that maintaining a streamlined HR service was critical; the potential risk being an interruption to business continuity and possible damage to their reputation. As Grace Hall, Finance Director explains: "For a business like ours, being left without an HR Manager was hugely problematic. Filling this gap in the business simply couldn't be done with existing internal resource; interim measures would just result in a 'firefighting' situation which is not sustainable, or sensible. "Effectively losing our whole HR function meant that we needed help with a wide variety of HR aspects, which at first seemed rather daunting. But then we were introduced to Reality HR at a networking event and were relieved to discover that all our HR needs could be met under one roof by this highly-recommended company. Continuity was very much our priority and we felt there might be further disruption if we had to outsource HR across several different suppliers.

"To add to the complex nature of our needs, R W Armstrong was changing and growing in alignment with new projects. Two key directors had also left us, throwing the company into a restructure. As with any period of transition like this, job roles and expectations needed to be more clearly defined, performance issues needed addressing, and contracts and policies needed reviewing from a compliance perspective. There were also many other elements of HR that we had to get trusted guidance and support on."

Reality HR has been our anchor in the storm. Not only did they remedy current difficult circumstances with their calm professionalism and expert know-how, their impartial viewpoint has allowed them to make valuable observations of our business and broad-scope recommendations from a place of clear and unbiased judgement. Supported by their vast industry experience, we now move forward as a business with renewed clarity and confidence.

GRACE HALL - FINANCE DIRECTOR

THE ACTION TAKEN BY REALITY HR

Reality HR joined R W Armstrong to operate as their complete HR department, taking the following steps to address both immediate issues and the 'bigger picture' of HR in line with medium and long-term business objectives:

- set out a full HR plan for the next 6-12 months
- completed a cultural assessment and ran a follow-up workshop with Senior Managers
- reviewed and implemented contracts for Senior Managers (with PTRs) in turn supporting
- promotions and restructure of the Senior Management Team (SMT)
- undertook salary benchmarking for senior roles (SMT, Surveyors and Construction Managers)
- rolled out a performance management processes across the whole company
- launched a manager training programme (HR Essentials for Managers)
- coached Finance Director and Purchasing Team members
- introduced Quest psychometric profiling for development and recruitment
- assisted with recruitment, supporting a new competency-based interview structure
- examined and updated handbook/policies
- analysed and improved induction and probation processes
- provided on-site support across all levels of the organisation as well as by phone, including ad-hoc support
- regularly attended Senior Manager's Quarterly Strategic reviews and business planning meetings



THE OUTCOME

With more clarity and consistency across the business, R W Armstrong is experiencing the following advantages of outsourcing their HR function:

- All activity is rooted in a plan that serves KPIs and expert recommendations light the way ahead
- There's greater awareness of the business culture which allows a more insightful approach to HR matters
- A strong management team is in place and they have access to the coaching and training that enables leadership excellence
- Performance management is streamlined in a way that monitors and motivates all staff, complemented by profiling
- More intelligent recruitment practices are bringing the right type of candidates into the business and reducing the possibility of incompatibility issues further down the line, conserving resource
- Contracts, handbooks, policies and processes are compliant and fit for purpose, helping the smooth
- Running of the business day-to-day
- Peace of mind comes from on-site and telephone support whenever it's required, allowing prompt resolution of HR matters and access to the vast expertise of a range of HR specialists
- Regularly attended Senior Manager's Quarterly Strategic reviews and business planning meetings

“ We haven't outsourced HR in the last ten years, so this was a bold move for us but it has served the changing landscape of the business immensely. Reality HR has brought so many valuable skills into our business that we were in desperate need of and a sense of perspective and clarity that we could never have found in one internal HR role. Their straight-talking, honest evaluation of the business has been a huge catalyst for us, illuminating areas for improvement that we would never have picked up on ourselves. That refreshing bird's eye view is possible because they're removed from the day to day running of the business and there is no history there. Yet, it never feels like they're removed in terms of the way they work with us, efficiently meshing with our team at all levels to meet a variety of needs. We're a much more effective, profitable business with engaged employees now. There's a free flow of information from Reality HR whenever we need it and a steer that I'm not really sure how we managed without. ”

GRACE HALL - FINANCE DIRECTOR