



Awards 2014 Case Study

Award Winner

SME of the Year 1-50

Provelio Limited

Provelio is a business that is proud of its reputation for punching well above its weight in the world of project management, thanks in large part to strong leadership and a commitment to staff development.



The winner of CEW's SME of the Year 2014 for businesses with fewer than 50 employees, Provelio is a small organisation with big systems and a desire to be better, constantly looking for ways to adopt, improve and advocate best practice.

With a current staff of 30, ambitious expansion plans are in place for the next couple of years whilst continuing to maintain a focus on effective leadership, integration and collaborative working both within the organisation and throughout the schemes in which it is involved. During the past year alone, Provelio has won 19 new clients, predominantly in the public sector in which it has built up a strong track record during its 12 years in operation. Further growth is targeted for the south east of England where it has two offices - as well as its head office in Bristol and one in Cardiff - and the workforce is set to reach 50-strong by 2016. In Wales, the business's impressive client base includes Swansea, Cardiff Metropolitan and Glamorgan universities, as well as the museum at St Fagan's.

It is clear that a strong culture of opportunity and improvement for the workforce is key to these plans. Everyone in the company has an annual subscription to LYNDIA.com from which they have access to an enormously wide range of training programmes. Graduate staff are encouraged to pursue MSc courses in relevant subjects, as well as aiming

for chartered or fellowship status within relevant membership bodies. In fact, 65% of Provelio employees are now Chartered. This environment of CPD, according to director Mark Plenty, makes them both a more informed business and more critically challenging, enabling them to look at issues from different perspectives and improving problem solving skills.

The company's reputation for investing in staff - currently providing at least 40 hours' training per person each year - is filtering through the industry, with the 'Provelio story' creating a buzz in the recruitment market place, explains Mark. "Some quite senior people who have worked for bigger organisations are coming through the door interested in the level of staff investment, the exciting projects we are working on and the decent size of many of them. They are looking for the kind of career development we are offering and can see we have a balanced organisation with the structure in place for them to grow within it. We also ensure people are properly mentored so they reach their full potential. Without our staff, we have nothing as a business. They are our number one priority."

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Director, Provelio

A significant role in the on-going success of Provelio is played by the rigorous systems they have in place for quality control and continuity of delivery, which enable staff to provide a consistent approach across the business and give clients the reassurance of seamless and highly professional delivery. The success of this approach is demonstrated through a 100% client retention rate between 2012 and 2013. There are also dedicated health and safety systems that have resulted in a zero accidents record, with all staff given an H&S induction on their first day with the company and annual refresher training. And as part of its growth strategy, Provelio has developed a bid management system which stores all previous tender answers in one database, making bid writing 65% more efficient and improving the company's success rate by 15%.

Mark Plenty said: “Although we fit into the SME category – and we are really chuffed to have won this award – we are passionate about continued delivery so we don't give the impression of being a small business. Right from the start we have given the impression of having been around longer and being a bit bigger than we are. We make sure if someone is ill or away the client is not let down, as may happen elsewhere. Everything is well documented with quality control systems in place so that anyone in the company knows where to find a particular document straight away. The bid management database also helps us respond to tenders in a structured and consistent way.”

In addition to project management, Provelio has recently begun developing a consultancy side to the business. Tapping into their vast experience, not just of writing their own bid documents but of selecting

contractors for clients on the strength of their submissions, during the past 12 months they have been offering a service reviewing bid and tender documents for contractors, and also training them in interview skills and techniques.

Provelio promotes itself as a team player whether it is getting involved in communities in which it operates - at least 80% of staff are involved in some form of community benefit programme – or sharing best practice within the construction industry. To this end, the business produced a research paper called “From Uncertainty to Certainty” which compares two similar jobs using different procurement methods. Since publication, Provelio has presented on this topic at numerous conferences and events across the country and promoted discussion via social media. The paper has the additional benefit of demonstrating the thoroughness of Provelio's approach.

Provelio's core values are contained in the acronym PRICE, which stands for professionalism, respect, integrity, care and enthusiasm. These values coupled with the methods employed in maintaining them, make Provelio stand out as a small business with a big future.