

Keep Your Employees Close and Your Communities Closer

The importance of engaging with colleagues, communities and wider stakeholders for quarrying and mineral extractives operators large and small is no longer a luxury but is increasingly now embedded in corporate strategy and business culture.

The Institute of Quarrying's Engagement, Influence and Impact segment of its Skills Wheel looks at how quarrying and mineral extractives professionals work within teams and within their wider communities. Its comprehensive collection of 'Factsheets' provides useful information about the importance of community engagement, employee communication and tips on how to get the best out of your workforce.

So, how do organizations measure success in these areas? In its spring 2017 'Employee Outlook' survey, the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) reported that, overall, scores for many of its measures of employee engagement have increased among those surveyed. There has been an increase in job satisfaction and an increase in engagement measures of employee influence over job, use of skills, motivation and effort. Employees are also more satisfied with opportunities for employee voice, and attitudes towards senior leaders have once again improved.

James Thorne, chief executive of the Institute of Quarrying, said: 'As an industry, we are always looking at how we can improve what we do, from investing in new technologies that deliver ever greater operating efficiencies to better ways of retaining and motivating our most important assets – our people.'

'There are some fantastic examples of businesses doing great things to motivate their people – often simple things that make all the difference. And the way the sector engages and influences its communities and wider stakeholders is as good as anything I've seen in any industry. But as with all things, it's about continuous improvement and learning from each other.'

Setting standards

John Wainwright & Co. Ltd is an independent quarry operator and the only basalt quarry in the Mendip region of Somerset. Founded in 1891, the business is still family owned and prides itself on the people-focused culture that it has successfully embedded over the years. The company directly employs more than 100 people, along with 60 lorry drivers and 20 contractors. It is a major employer in Stoke St Michael with many generations of the same family working in the business.

Peter Barkwill FIQ is chief executive. He has spent his entire professional life in the quarrying industry and has piloted Wainwright through an extensive period of



The Somerset Earth Science Centre – built on land gifted to the community by John Wainwright & Co Ltd

growth. He said: 'We're a fiercely progressive business, with ambitious plans for growth that include our recent £9 million investment in a new asphalt plant at Avonmouth. We can only achieve this by nurturing and rewarding the support of the people who work for us, as well as by being good neighbours to our wider community.'

'We recently appointed our first full-time HR director. This is a key strategic role that recognizes the importance of employee engagement and motivation as a business enabler. We have always valued our people but with this new role we are taking things to the next level.'

'We take our responsibilities very seriously. Our pivotal position in the community makes us accountable on many levels – for people's' livelihoods, and as custodians of the natural environment. It's our moral imperative to ensure we do the right thing by all our stakeholders and that's what we aim to achieve.'

Lisa Saunders, Wainwright's HR director, has spent a lot of time getting out and around the company, listening to and learning about the business and its people. Lisa explained: 'It's very clear that people really matter at Wainwright. That's our people and the people in our community.'

'Within the business we place a high value on rewarding commitment and loyalty. That can be as simple as buying someone a birthday cake on a landmark celebration to rewarding the whole business with a

company event. We recently held our first 'summer party', which was a huge success and brought together people from across the business. Our initiatives are not formalized as in a large corporate organization – they're more personal and sometimes spontaneous, such as our famous 'pasty run', when we deliver delicious locally baked pasties around the site. It's hugely popular and generates amazing goodwill.'

'Then there's the great work we're doing with MPQC on apprenticeships as a vehicle for introducing a whole new generation to the wonderful world of quarrying. This is about developing an entry-level Quarry Operations Apprenticeship for 16-year-olds, capturing their interest early and creating the next generation of quarryiers. We're doing this in partnership with other local independent operators and are very excited about the prospect of being able to recruit and train apprentices locally.'

Beyond the business Wainwright reach deep into their community. The Wainwright Futures Foundation is the brainchild of chief executive Peter Barkwill. It awards grants to local community organizations and causes. The Foundation's guiding principles are about encouraging environmental sustainability and communities flourishing in Wainwright's areas of operations. Projects include supporting Somerset Wildlife Trust's environmental work, as well as sponsoring a local history trail celebrating the culture of a local village. ►



Quarry worker pushing a loaded wagon in 1938 – one of more than 25,000 images from Tarmac's photographic archive

Further evidence of the company's commitment to community engagement is right on its doorstep. The Somerset Earth Science Centre sits alongside John Wainwright & Co Ltd's Moons Hill Quarry and is built on land gifted by the company to the community. The field study centre provides a range of learning experiences for schools and students of all ages, through classroom activities and practical fieldwork in working and non-operational quarry sites. The Centre is financed by the local quarrying industry, which includes Aggregate Industries, Hanson, Tarmac, Morris & Perry and Wainwright.

Earning our licence

Tarmac's Tunstead Quarry outside Buxton is part of the local landscape. The business is a significant and historically important operation within Tarmac and includes quarry, lime, building products and cement operations.

Viv Russell FIQ is lime and powders director at Tarmac, with full commercial and operational control. Based at Tunstead, he is proud of the site's track record of employee engagement and how this manifests itself at a local level.

'As a business our ethos is all about inclusion and transparency. That breeds a culture of trust with people empowered to participate, who have a voice and who are listened to.

'At Tunstead, we're big believers in getting our people involved. A great example is our

Value Awards, which reward people within the business, whose behaviour and actions reflect the Tarmac values of Safe, Committed to our Customers, Passionate about Success, Fast and Flexible, One Team and Trust and Respect. Employees are nominated by their colleagues and receive a certificate of recognition and small financial reward.'

Important key performance indicators used within the Lime and Powders business at Tunstead focus on people involvement. These include measures such as 60 'Value Awards' to date in 2017, 150 'That's Good' suggestions in 2016 and 70 'Talent Moves, Secondments and Promotions' from 2013 to 2017. This involvement is also recognized by Tunstead's commitment to professional development and its award as an Institute of Quarrying PRIME (Professional Recognition In Mineral Extractives) site.

PRIME's Technical Member (TMIQ) status recognizes individuals working in quarrying through the introduction of a new membership grade of the Institute of Quarrying. This is through the achievement of vocational and other qualifications along with the completion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which combine to form a crucial link in the overall career pathway, running from a level 2 NVQ/QCF to a full Honours Degree.

Of equal importance to Tarmac at Tunstead is its reputation and role within its local

community. Quarrying has taken place on site since the late 1800s. Gaining the trust and support of the surrounding area is essential.

Viv Russell continued: 'We have to earn our licence to operate, which recognizes the importance of our role as stewards of the local landscape, but we are also a major employer and have contributed over £50 million annually to the local economy. Therefore, it is so important to us to engender good relationships and the support of our neighbours through mutual collaboration and trust.

'We are involved in a compelling oral history project with Discover Buxton and have held a number of exhibitions in Buxton of our image archive, attracting over 1,500 visitors. The list goes on, but by sharing our experiences and making what we do open and accessible, we are trusted and earn our licence to operate within the community.'

Quarrying operations big and small recognize the huge benefits derived from investing in strategies that recognize, reward and respect the valuable contribution of employees. Extending this culture of communication beyond the quarry is how the industry will continue to enhance its reputation and foster support for its essential role in today's modern world.

For more information about the IQ Skills Wheel and Engagement, Influence and Impact, visit: www.quarrying.org

QM