

Unleashing potential

Macnaughton McGregor Ltd has been offering businesses the tools to improve their performance for five years. The expanding team is now looking forward to a year of continued success, as Rebecca Eves discovers.

OFTEN KNOWN as 2macs (the Gosforth-based firm was established by Audrey Macnaughton and Cherry McGregor), Macnaughton McGregor has recently been joined by a third Mac, Fiona Macaskill. Fiona's appointment as director cements the steady growth of the training and development firm, which received the Investor in People accolade in 2005, and became an Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) centre in 2007.

Focusing on boosting business performance, 2macs offers a wide range of services to support the people side of business. The services include training and development, business planning, and leadership and management training, as well as mapping training to recognised qualifications where necessary.

Project manager, Amanda Taylor, has also recently joined the firm, while Sam Patterson, training and development consultant at 2macs for three years, completes the team. Alongside permanent staff, a tight-knit community of associates is used to facilitate training sessions and workshops within their area of expertise.

Macnaughton McGregor strives to build a strong relationship with clients, working with existing HR departments, or starting from the basics - such as the business plan - if necessary.

Audrey points out: "We work in collaboration with clients, providing feedback and trying to add more value. Sometimes we have to be bold enough to point out what should be a priority."

Fiona adds: "It's often about unleashing the potential in individuals. Our job is to allow people to realise what they're capable of. Then the company benefits as a result."

The results of training and development make a tangible difference within businesses: "Around 40 people went through a team leader programme we held for a national food manufacturer," Audrey recalls, "and as a result of the improvement projects in the programme the company had real financial returns."



The directors with the other team members: Amanda Taylor and Sam Patterson.



2macs becomes 3macs. Left to right: Cherry McGregor, Audrey Macnaughton and Fiona Macaskill.

One team leader alone had a return of £60,000 a week from his improvement project."

As well as working to develop the businesses of clients, the team at Macnaughton McGregor are constantly maintaining their own personal and professional development. And from their vantage point within the business world, the potential highs and lows of the coming year are visible.

"The worst thing would be to talk ourselves into a recession," says Fiona. "I'm maintaining a positive view of what 2008 can bring - including new and different challenges. I do think businesses in the North East might have to start working smarter, but it doesn't need to all be doom and gloom."

Audrey agrees, adding: "It's also important for us, as a region, to showcase what we've got, develop it, and put in an infrastructure that encourages people to buy locally - particularly in knowledge-intensive business services such as ours - and to source local talent."

The coming year looks set to bring further benefits to Macnaughton McGregor, and its clients, with the firm working to achieve its ISO 9001 quality assurance brand, as well as expanding its national network and its work within the public sector. If the 2macs' example is anything to go by, the businesses it assists will enjoy profitable results.

For more information, contact Macnaughton McGregor on (0191) 246 1160, email enquiries@2macs.com or visit www.2macs.com

Two examples from the Macnaughton McGregor portfolio...

Mills Group

The Whitley Bay-based retail group, which has a chain of 75 stores across England and Wales, has used Macnaughton McGregor for two years to train and develop its managers.

Commercial director, John Porrett, says of the team: "They have always provided excellent training for our managers, and on top of that, they are true business partners, advising on future plans and playing a key role in business events such as our annual conference."

NEPA

The North East Productivity Alliance (NEPA) is a One NorthEast initiative to improve the performance of the region's manufacturing industry. Macnaughton McGregor, as a service provider on the One NorthEast panel, is heavily involved with boosting productivity through strategy deployment and training and development, and with making the region's manufacturers more competitive in a national and international market.

Claire Weir, senior specialist at NEPA, comments: "I have worked with the team at Macnaughton McGregor on a number of projects. All feedback from the companies is extremely positive and the work they have done has been of significant benefit to the businesses."