

Interim engineer manages development programme

BASED IN SILVERTOWN, East London, directly opposite the Millennium Dome, Akzo Nobel's coatings division manufactures resins and specialist coatings for white goods, architectural, food and drink and industrial products.

The site had been starved of investment for many years but had excellent technical and R&D skills available. It was decided to invest £50 million and create a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant with the capacity to expand and produce top-quality innovative products. This plan involved major changes to staff competencies and management systems.

A key role in the reorganisation was chief engineer, a resource that was not available at Silvertown. General manager of operations, Dave Parr, realised that it would not be possible to find one person to fulfil the immediate and long-term roles: "To work on the change-management programme required someone with a high level of experience but once that was completed and the role became less demanding we would need a less senior person with long-term potential." Having worked with interim managers before, he was aware of the calibre of people available

and approached Impact Executives who introduced Tony Kell, an engineer specialising in performance improvement and change management in technical businesses. He had held chief engineer roles for several companies.

Before he left, Tony introduced staff development programmes and mentored his successor to take over his role. So successful was this assignment that Akzo Nobel is using interim managers in other capacities.

"His ability to deal equally comfortably with management issues and at the same time coach technicians on the plant is probably unique for someone with his level of experience. Tony was able to bring us management and leadership skills."

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