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# *Assessment* ***HRC: GDP Induction Briefing – Referral***

# *Words*  ***1790***

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## ***#1 | Welcome to the GDP family!***

Welcome, and congratulations on successfully completing the induction program for Gill Davies Productions (GDP Ltd). My name is Michael – and on request of People Manager Claire Fletcher, I have written this brief to acquaint you with our organisation. I am sure you have a lot of questions, and I hope this text becomes a helpful companion to your time with us. Our purpose is, “to make juggling accessible and fun for the whole family” – I hope to do the same here!

##### ***#2 | What does GDP do?***

A few key facts about us:

* GDP specialises in the distribution, use, and assemblage of recreational juggling balls
* We ship within the UK domestically, and seeing increasing demand from overseas markets
* Services range from creating basic and custom balls, and teaching programs for retailers
* By the end of 2016 we want to become the global consumers’ first choice for all juggling ball purchases by largest market share
* Key demographics are retailers, schools, performers, counsellors, trainers, and – of course – anyone who enjoys juggling
* Buyer interest is generated from shopping centre shows, social media and our website (dpgplc.co.uk)
* Orders are taken online or by telephone using the Q.E.C. standard (this stands for: ‘quick, efficient, and customer-focused’)
* We cite our purpose (“make juggling accessible and fun for the whole family”) in all marketing material

#### **#3 | What are GDP’s values and Customer Charter?**

GDP is no exception to the belief that strong values nurture good business.

Here are our values in more detail:

* ***We want to make “family-orientated” products.*** Juggling is an accessible pastime to every member of family looking to have fun. We want to offer alternatives to the often isolating experience of gaming consoles and mobile devices.
* ***Secondly, we want to “delight our customers”.*** Every GDP colleague works to ensure the customer experience is stress-free. We do this by a straightforward order process, transparent order tracking, and promptly responding to inquiries.
* ***And finally, we want to “make things happen”.*** Honesty and trustworthiness are two sides of the same coin. This is why we go the extra mile to provide accurate information, and set realistic expectations before every order is confirmed.

These ‘Golden Threads’ have distinguished us from competitors throughout our 15-year history. They run through every department in the form of internal memos, strategic reporting, and business relationships. **(Porter, 1985).**

As a manager and role model: we encourage you to ask, ‘how can I inspire GDP’s values in others?’ You can contribute to this conversation by applying our operations to concepts such as the Boston Matrix. That is, the ‘Stars’ (emerging opportunities); ‘Cash Cows’ (currently profitable ventures); ‘Question Marks’ (good prospects); and ‘Dogs’ (things to cut). **(Henderson, 1970s).**

Here are the key points I identified:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Increasing growth** | *Stars: -** *Teaching*
 | *Question marks: -** *Online presence*
 |
| *Cash cows: -** *Juggling balls*
 | *Dogs: -** *Retention*
 |
| **Decreasing market share** |

## ***#4 | GDP’s culture and activities?***

GDP’s culture and wider activities serve as the unwritten rules and basic assumptions that define it. When employees are enthusiastic about the work they do, it translates into good conduct and better customer rapport. This is why our CEO is approachable, and works tactically to foster a role-task orientated culture from the main floor.

We find accessibility of management positively influences the behaviour of team leaders and colleagues, alike. There are departmental subcultures, which, the majority of the time work well together – but sometimes do not work in tangent. A typical example would be colleagues competing for sales, and overly reassuring customers of complex orders; orders that production may struggle to meet.

It is clear there are elements within GDP that operate at David Logan’s Stage 2 and Stage 3 level of tribal leadership. Our stakeholders will need to work on nudging those not yet at Stage 4. Training is key, but managers will play a key role in delivery because they influence all stages. **(Logan, 2009).**

It is also important to commit ourselves to compatible good works with GDP’s values. This is why we recently contributed 12-80 hours of time and effort to UK national charity, Spare Anything. Another example involved meeting a regional hospital order of 500,000 juggling balls for China. Not only do these high-profile cases improve our brand’s profile at home and abroad – it makes our colleagues proud to work for us.

## ***#5 | What external and internal factors +/- effect GDP?***

Like every organisation, we need to remain competitive. An effective way of doing so is annual use of the S.W.O.T. table. This considers the ‘strengths’, ‘weaknesses’, ‘opportunities’, and ‘threats’ to an organisation. In broad strokes: our main strength is GDP’s brand reputation – but reputations need maintenance; a major weakness is high turnover from the production team; an opportunity ahead is overseas markets – but we need to be scalable to avoid being overwhelmed; and threats come in the form of poor customer feedback and lack of innovation in the product line. **(Humphrey, 1960s).**

Here is the latest S.W.O.T. analysis abridged for 2016:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths**  | **Weakness** |
| * *Clear 5-year plan*
* *Community involvement*
 | * *Limited rewards*
* *Limited local recruitment*
 |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| * *Rise in well-being market*
* *Potentially leading products*
 | * *Cheaper imports*
* *Increasing costs*
 |

Another way to identify areas of interest to our business is the P.E.S.T.L.E. method. That is, ‘political’, ‘economic’, ‘sociological’, ‘technical’, ‘legal’, and ‘environmental’. **(Aguilar, 1967).**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **P** |  **–olitically:** change in UK immigration legislation * Impact: recruitment processes and sum total of overseas applicants
* Benefits: lowers risk of fraudulent activity and illegal work-permits
* Caveats: reapplication and revised eligibility of existing personnel
 |
| **E** |  **–conomically:** global recession and/or downturn* Impact: decreased revenue and funding for product development
* Benefits: opportunity to make cost-effective savings
* Caveats: risk to longevity of company and potential staff turnover
 |
| **S** | **–ociologically:** increasing public interest in wellbeing* Impact: new **engagement from prospect buyers**
* Benefits: **rise in profits from newly interested customers**
* Caveats: **temporary trend / increased competition from opportunists**
 |
| **T** |  **–echnically:** embrace new technologies to disrupt sales* Impact: increased **brand/product exposure**
* Benefits: **first-time customers discovered from online platforms**
* Caveats: **risk of lower sales intake versus investment/time needed**
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| **L** |  **–egally:** change in maximum working hours* Impact: revised staff contracts would need to be printed/signed off
* Benefits: embracing change makes company progressive
* Caveats: traditional working hours shakeup may influence culture
 |
| **E** |  **–nvironmentally:** use bio-degradable materials* Impact: loss of certain materials used to manufacture products
* Benefits: compliance with greener processes will boost reputation
* Caveats: potential price-hike in search for alternative materials
 |

Both S.W.O.T. and P.E.S.T.L.E. methods offer unique perspectives on the challenges facing GDP. But in isolation they can present misleading conclusions of the bigger picture. They are best used as a guide for decision-makers, and not the bottom-line.

## ***#6 | How do GDP’s structure and functions cooperate?***

At GDP we have a functional four tier hierarchy and five departments:

* Employees (or colleagues)
* Team leaders (or managers)
* Functional managers
	+ John Hanna is head of Sales and Marketing
	+ George Alexander is head of Production
	+ Mark Davies is head of Support Services
	+ Claire Fletcher is our People Manager (or HR Manager)
	+ Mike Johnson is head of Learning and Development (L&D)
* CEO
	+ Gill Davies

Every department is mission critical to our organisation, because no single role can support the entire business alone. Our colleagues engage with our customers; the team leaders manage performance; functional managers oversee their respective departments; and our CEO provides the direction and vision of the company. This is why it is vital that information runs freely and everyone is open to critical feedback to enrich output.

Each department is well defined by its function:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Department**  | **Function** |
| *Sales and Marketing* | *Keeping the commercial world aware of our products and services* |
| *Production* | *Creating basic and custom juggling balls on demand*  |
| *Support Services* | *IT and finance professionals; with some recruitment crossover* |
| *HR* | *Keeps good employee relations and influences key stakeholders*  |
| *L&D* | *Responsible for induction, and the training of staff* |

But there are areas we can improve coordination and cooperation between these respective departments:

* **Induction:** A recent need identified by HR is to work closer with L&D to improve induction’s effectiveness. We also need to retrain personnel from the Support Services in response to colleagues feeling unprepared after recruitment.
* **Team restructuring:** To increase productivity we want to move our colleagues away from working alone and closer together. Issues can arise when functions are unable to communicate effectively. This typically takes the form of sales orders moving beyond what production can deliver.
* **Turnover:** There has been high turnover of process operators despite long tenure. This trend parallels the increase in demand for our products. One reason for burnout could be increased pressure on the existing workforce that needs expansion. We will also increase observations of team leaders to reward good behaviours.
* **Leadership.** We also want to disincentivize ‘country club’ leadership type (that is to say, high relationship to the detriment of high task). **(Blake and Mouton, 1985).**

## ***#7 | What is the contribution of HR?***

And lastly, we turn to the contribution made by HR to the organisation. Businesses thrive when a highly skilled workforce is committed to further development. We start this process early with recruitment and induction programmes.

We write job advertisements and select a number of sources to canvas. Depending on the skill set required – our source could be a job board like indeed.com, a professional network (such as LinkedIn), or a local newspaper. We follow this with candidate selection, interview, and a potential job offer.

Once employed, it is important to monitor initial induction and the integration of all new employees. Each employee represents an investment of time, energy and cost – so we work hard to retain every member of staff. Long-term this means promoting a cohesive company culture, keeping the workforce motivated by sharing GDP’s successes, and setting up annual performance reviews.

Diversity workshops are championed and we monitor performance assessments at every level of seniority. We also work closely with line managers to make sure they encourage a good work ethic. These checks and balances help us identify struggling employees before attendance issues or disgruntlement sets in, or in some cases – formal action needs to take place. Investment is always preferable to the loss of valuable personnel and damage to GDP’s reputation.

As part of the HR Service Charter – I have included some of ways we personnel support our managers and colleagues:

* We offer managers colleague training and performance advice. Though true, every team has its own personality – there are quality standards to maintain.
* Skill sets of managers are routinely assessed; this ensures they have the relevant knowledge to act as role models.
* Our colleagues are provided support in payroll disputes and recruitment induction. We also communicate progress to staff via the company intranet to maintain engagement.
* Additionally: HR monitor and coach colleagues for rewards and recognition. We also lead performance reviews to focus our teams’ goals and objectives.

## References

**Online Resources**

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* DPG plc (2016) Learning path 1 – Your programme introduction [Internet]. Manchester: DPG Available at: [http://dpgplc.willowpathway.com/Learner/Course/Index/64756##tab1](http://dpgplc.willowpathway.com/Learner/Course/Index/64756) [accessed 3rd February 2016]
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* GDP Ltd (2016) What’s Next [Internet]. Manchester: Gill Davies Productions Available: <http://217.199.187.67/gdptest.dpgplc.co.uk/?page_id=34> [accessed 10th February 2016]
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* GDP Ltd (2016) Our Products [Internet]. Manchester: Gill Davies Productions Available: <http://217.199.187.67/gdptest.dpgplc.co.uk/?page_id=63> [accessed 7th February 2016]
* GDP Ltd (2016) Our People [Internet]. Manchester: Gill Davies Productions Available: <http://217.199.187.67/gdptest.dpgplc.co.uk/?page_id=8> [accessed 7th February 2016]
* GDP Ltd (2016) Press Releases [Internet]. Manchester: Gill Davies Productions Available: <http://217.199.187.67/gdptest.dpgplc.co.uk/?page_id=51> [accessed 10th February 2016]

**Other**

* HRC assessment template v 1.0
* HRC assessment brief v 1.0