

Case Study

Orms

OUR SERVICE:
Employee Ownership
BUSINESS SECTOR:
Architect Practice

Our accountants introduced us to Robert Postlethwaite and we just respected him. We liked the way he gave clear direct answers"

OLIVER RICHARDS, DIRECTOR, ORMS

Orms

The business

A successful and reputed multi-sector architects practice, with over seventy employees, moved from being owned by two individuals to majority ownership by an employee ownership trust (EOT), for the benefit of its employees.

Why employee ownership (EO)?

Orms' directors recognised the importance, as a key element in its long term strategy, of collaborative working rather than an individualistic culture. It wished to put in place a new ownership structure that would place collaboration at the core.

EO was seen as the solution: giving employees a meaningful stake and a say in how the business is run, reward and foster strong team working and allow people to grow in the practice.

How does it work?

The company is now 80% owned by an EOT and run by three trustees: one employee, one director and one independent person with knowledge of the construction industry.

The EOT's role is to ensure that Orms is successfully run as an employee-owned company, fostering employee engagement and encouraging a leadership style in which employees' views, ideas and questions are listened to and taken into account in decision making.

To assist in this approach an Employee Council (EC), comprising of nine employees was set up. The EC's primary role is to be the employees' voice. Discussing employee's questions and responding or passing onto the trustees, who will in turn deal or raise with the Directors if necessary – and then feedback to the EC.

The leadership and management of the company is the responsibility of its board of directors, not the trustees or the EC. Certain major steps require trustee approval.

Although success is not measured only by reference to profit, financial reward for employee contribution is a key feature of the Orms employee ownership structure (at any level).

