

**ADVANCED GCE
LEISURE STUDIES**

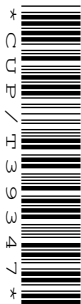
G184/CS

Unit 5: Human Resources in the Leisure Industry

PRE-RELEASE CASE STUDY

JANUARY 2008

To be opened on receipt



INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS

- This case study **must** be opened and given to candidates on receipt.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- You **must** make yourself familiar with the case study before you sit the examination.
- You **must not** take notes into the examination.
- A clean copy of the case study will be given to you with the question paper.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

GOactive

GOactive was founded in the spring of 2006 by two friends, Richard Jones and Emma McAvoy. They had met at college whilst studying for A levels. After college, Richard went to university and in 2006 graduated with a degree in Leisure Management. In the meantime Emma, not wishing to go to university, had worked as a Leisure Assistant for the local district council.

During the autumn of 2005, the district council had awarded the contract to run the leisure facilities in the district to a private sector organisation. After a review of programmes, services and operating practices in all the leisure facilities within the district, the company implemented a rationalisation programme which resulted in several staff being made redundant. In December 2005, Emma McAvoy was among those staff made redundant. 5

Despite this setback, Emma remained confident in her own abilities and retained a desire to work in the leisure industry. She had enjoyed working in the leisure industry and was particularly keen to carry on working with children in a leisure and sport environment. In order to improve her employment opportunities, Emma decided to invest some of her redundancy money in coaching courses. These included coaching courses for football, cricket, hockey and trampoline. In addition, Emma took some extra courses covering first aid and the coaching of children, young people and disabled performers. 10 15

Despite gaining these nationally recognised qualifications, Emma rarely found suitable full-time employment opportunities appearing in the local press. Just when Emma was at her lowest level of motivation she bumped into Richard Jones whilst swimming at her local leisure centre. Afterwards, they went for a meal and a drink to talk about 'old times'. 20

The two of them hit it off again immediately. It was during this chance meeting that Richard first informed Emma of his plans for when he finished his degree in the summer. Recognising that well paid full-time employment was often difficult to come by in the leisure industry, Richard was keen to start his own leisure business. He had come back to the district in order to research his business idea. 25

During his university vacations, Richard had worked for various local authority summer playschemes and believed he had spotted a gap in the market for a private sector organisation to provide a much improved product. Emma was impressed by his plans and told Richard what she had been up to over the last three years. Richard was, in turn, impressed by Emma's qualifications, skills and attitude. 30

And so *GOactive* was born. The two partners quickly put their plans into action. The first summer schools ran during the summer of 2006 and were oversubscribed, partly due to the high levels of employment and affluent nature of the locality. Initially, *GOactive* offered a limited range of activities focusing on fun, exercise and good quality coaching. These included football, cricket, tag rugby, netball, mini-golf and hockey. The target market was 6–13 year old boys and girls. 35

GOactive recruited staff from amongst Emma's contacts in the local leisure centres and by advertisements in local schools and colleges. All employees were employed on a fixed-term contract basis and wage rates were below those paid by other private sector leisure organisations in the area. There were some problems recruiting suitable staff but eventually *GOactive* managed to recruit a number of well qualified senior and junior coaches. In addition, Emma recruited a number of casual staff who expressed an interest in developing their qualifications and skills within the leisure sector. However, high labour turnover amongst the casual staff became a problem. 40

By the end of the summer, *GOactive* had made a small profit. Over the winter period, Richard and Emma developed their business plan, significantly extending the range of activities on offer, and when and where they planned to offer them. 45

From Easter 2007, *GOactive* ran sessions during all school holidays and on weekends, operating from 8.30 am until 6.00 pm. Despite operating from over ten different locations within the district, Richard and Emma had no formal organisational structure for *GOactive*. Teams for each location were made up on an ad-hoc basis, often at very short notice due to staff shortages and absenteeism. Each team was given the responsibility for organising the activities on offer according to the individual qualifications and skills the team possessed. 50

Despite what Richard and Emma believed to be good working conditions, *GOactive* still suffered problems in recruiting and retaining staff. *GOactive* did not use job descriptions or person specifications during its recruitment and selection process, preferring instead to make decisions based primarily on each applicant's performance during a group interview. 55

Richard was particularly concerned with the high labour turnover and the high levels of absenteeism which were seriously affecting the business. Several times during the summer of 2007, Richard received complaints from angry parents about the lack of activities on offer and, on more than one occasion, courses had to be cancelled.

That summer turned out to be a watershed for Richard and Emma. *GOactive* was a huge success with demand for places on the summer schools far outstripping the supply. Keen to make the most of the opportunity, Richard approached the district council to negotiate the use of a further 20 sites for *GOactive* summer schools. At the same time, the nearby city council contacted Richard and Emma with a view to entering into a partnership with *GOactive* to provide its summer schools in 2008. 60 65

Following initial consultations, the head of Leisure Services at the district council became aware of the staffing problems at *GOactive* and suggested to Richard and Emma that they review the human resource issues of their business. After the review, the head of Leisure Services arranged a formal meeting with Richard and Emma to discuss the way forward. A draft agenda for the meeting was agreed (**see Fig. 1**). 70

Draft agenda	
Item 1	Planning future staff needs
Item 2	Organisational structures
Item 3	Solving the recruitment problems
Item 4	Managing the performance of employees – financial and non-financial approaches

Fig. 1

The meeting took place in October 2007, following which Richard and Emma began to address the human resource issues which exist at *GOactive*.

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