

Constructing industry requirements through the NVQ process

John GRAHAM (Dromore) Ltd

The Business Benefits

GRAHAM have built NVQs into their overall training and development strategy. They believe that NVQs are one tool in a range of training tools which can help to support their business objectives.

NVQs contribute to :

Employees' increased awareness of procedures and processes

Raising the skills levels of employees

Developing employees' potential to meet future manpower needs of the company

Increased motivation and loyalty within the workforce

The company's existing training ethos which was recognised with the achievement of IIP in September 1999

More employees gaining their professional status

The full story inside





Michael Graham & Dr Sean Farren

John GRAHAM (Dromore) Ltd

GRAHAM's heritage in the construction industry dates back over a century, giving the company a wealth of experience to draw on as they look to the future.

GRAHAM's achievements in building and civil engineering are unrivalled in Northern Ireland, and range from major landmarks such as Belfast's Cross Harbour Road and Rail Links to factories and housing developments.

The company is a leading supplier of precast concrete hard landscaping materials, reconstructed stone walling and dressings. GRAHAMs pioneered the use of glassfibre reinforced cement in the manufacture of concrete cladding panels. In addition they supply quarry products from rock armour to high quality aggregates from 3 strategically located quarries in Northern Ireland.

A continuing programme of IT development combined with a firm commitment to staff training endorses the company's belief in

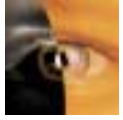
the value of internal support and investment. As well as applying this philosophy successfully across all the GRAHAM activities, they also provide similar support services to many external clients.

GRAHAM provides a wide range of work experience for local schools and the company participates in school enterprise days by conducting mock job interviews and participating in projects which link commerce to education. During 'Construction Week' the company organises site visits for local HNC and HND students so that they can get a feel for the cutting edge in the industry.

Armed with an impressive and diverse track record GRAHAM is focused on expansion and future growth backed up by their centre of excellence in Dromore and a network of area offices throughout Northern Ireland and East Anglia. But, above all, they attribute their continued success to their genuine desire and commitment to do the best job possible for their clients.

“National Vocational Qualifications ensure a steady supply of skilled craftsmen, thereby maintaining the GRAHAM reputation for high standards of workmanship.”

The NVQ Programme



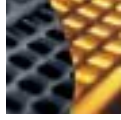
When GRAHAM initially introduced the NVQ programme

in 1997 the only previous experience the company had was the Modern Apprenticeship system which was compulsory for construction apprentices. The organisation decided to pursue NVQs in earnest when they were offered funding by the T&EA through the Company Development Programme.



The organisation decided to use the expertise of

GRAHAM Training, the training arm of their organisation, which is an approved centre for a number of NVQ awards. They found this partnership invaluable because of GRAHAM Training's knowledge of the construction industry and because they were also able more easily to interpret the NVQ jargon. The NVQs which GRAHAMs decided were most appropriate for them were Site Management, Site Supervision, HR Management, Accounting, Administration and Selling.



All assessments and training are carried out in-house, with

many candidates having a mentor from GRAHAM Training assigned to them to ensure they understand how the NVQ integrates into their job role. Candidates are supported by their mentor through informal meetings and by telephone where appropriate. External bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) are involved in the final stages of verification.



CIOB has recently recognised NVQ 4 in Site Management

and NVQ 5 in Construction Project Management as alternative routes towards Chartered Status and a number of employees are now looking at whether the NVQ route is more suitable for them.



Managers within the company also recognise the value

of their staff completing NVQs. NVQ achievement is put on the staff notice board and congratulations are registered in the quarterly news bulletin. The Managing Director is

employer
case
studies

kept notified of each employee's achievement and he sends them a personalised memo on completion of their award.

For NVQ achievements in the construction arena, award ceremonies are held at CITB where the certificates are formally presented to the candidates. GRAHAM employees recently received their NVQ certificates at such a ceremony – 4 foremen achieved NVQ level 3 in Site Supervision and 4 managers received NVQ level 4 in Site Management.

“NVQs will continue to be used by John GRAHAM Ltd. where they clearly have a benefit to and are valued by the company and it's employees, allowing them to achieve formal qualifications, which recognises their competence.”

Employee Benefits

Increased understanding of the job roles

Increased knowledge of different areas within the organisation

An alternative route to professional status

More awareness of the value of training within the organisation

Increased motivation, loyalty and job satisfaction

An opportunity to gain a formal qualification without having to "return to school"

The Future

GRAHAM is focused on expansion and future growth based on a team of highly qualified experienced staff, who can control and deliver practical solutions and offer technical expertise and efficient organisation for every project undertaken. The NVQ route is one way of trying to ensure that high calibre staff are attracted, recruited and retained and as a way of ensuring that the company continues to enjoy the reputation of an organisation which realises the added value of investing in the training and development of their staff.

For further information on NVQ implementation and general NVQ information please contact:

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