

An Essential Success Story for Moypark

Moy Park first recognised literacy and numeracy problems among employees in 1996. During the introduction of the NVQ programme, a bright sixteen year old failed to successfully complete any of the written questions. However, the candidate was able to answer all the questions orally, showing the problem lay not in his comprehension but in his written literacy skills. When these literacy problems were identified it caused concern because these essential skills are required by most employees to perform their daily roles.

This was investigated further with a standard test undertaken by 100 operatives. The findings showed:

- **12% scored low in literacy**
- **12% scored low in numeracy**
- **6% scored low in both.**

This was a convincing sign that support was needed.

Moy Park identified some employees with considerable literacy and numeracy problems, even those who had recently completed full-time education. The company had a responsibility to ensure that all employees were suitably skilled for their jobs and adopted the position that it would help any employee who required

essential skills training. The vision was to provide a facility for everyone with a need in any communication field, to improve their disposition and confidence. This led to the establishment of an award winning Essential Skills programme.

The programme commenced as a pilot scheme in partnership with the local Further Education College providing a tutor for three hours per week. To date some 300 employees have benefited from the programme with the interest rate remaining high.

The positive uptake of the programme was due in part to the way it involved everyday learning, examples such as 'How to Help your children with their homework'; 'Learning to Drive – help with your theory test'. This

sensitive approach addressed the stigma of joining an essential skills programme, communicating the learning in an adult fashion.

Another major influence contributing to the programme's success was the support of the company which showed leadership in dealing with this important matter. The programme quickly became well established and justified the additional resource of a full time tutor.

Business Benefits

There were multiple benefits to this programme which Moy Park reviewed using the tutor's progress reports and observed improvements on the factory floor including;

- Increased performance levels
- Improved quality awareness

- Growing confidence in communication alongside increased self esteem
- Increased calculation accuracy
- Reduced accidents
- Increased labour stability and people were more willing to learn new tasks
- Reduced customer complaints
- Improved efficiency and reduced down time due to flexibility
- Improved team work to increase flexibility

Tangible benefits to staff

The main benefit to employees as a result of improved numeracy and literacy is their raised self esteem. Also, the fear has been removed from writing or comprehending written instructions. As the employees improved their capabilities they were empowered to apply for promotions to jobs with more responsibility, for example they could better understand information technology and work with technologically advanced machinery.

Employees who have undertaken the programme are

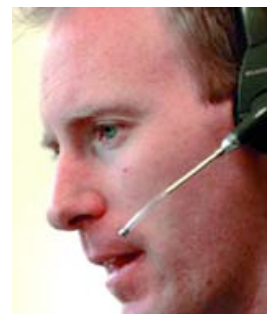
now more proficient at carrying out everyday tasks which many people take for granted, but can have a huge impact on a person's self confidence such as:

- The ability to help their children with Maths and English homework
- Understanding the internet
- Filling in forms
- Another member of staff was able to write the speech for his daughter's wedding – something he never would have thought possible before the programme

Today the tutor has 70 employees engaged in various forms of learning at any one time, from entry level Maths and English to levels 1 and 2. Moy Park's managers have always been very supportive of the development of their staff and encourage their progression as much as possible. The range of employee development extends across the company to fully accredited courses, for example 1,300 NVQs and 115 CLAIT certificates have now been awarded. There is no embarrassment to joining the different programmes as

employees are confident that they can approach the tutor and asked to be put onto the waiting list for the learning course of their choice.

10 years on and this programme is a resounding success for Moy Park and its employees.



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