HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS
BUSINESS SCENARIO SOLUTIONS
Scenario One: Utilitech

Solution: Utilitech approached the local university and college due to their past experience and knowledge within the industry area.

A number of relevant courses and programmes already existed as a platform to work upon. A BSc (Hons) Utilities Management degree provided a number of relevant topic areas as it had been developed in conjunction with the industry but this itself was not a viable option due to having to release employees for three years full time, or five years to complete it part time. A FdSc Utilities Management course had also been developed which covered a number of the general topic areas.

Working together, the university and local college developed additional technical modules in water and waste water processes. Energy and Utility Skills, the industry’s Sector Skills Council and Foundation Degree Forward also provided support for the development of the programme.

The training solution was delivered through the university who employ a number of former Utilitech Technical Managers to help work with business and bridge the gap between industry and university cultures.

Benefits have been experienced by both the organisation and individuals. The organisation has seen the following benefits:

- Improved employee motivation and commitment
- Ability for the company to ‘grow their own’ higher technician and associate level employees
- Closer relationship with the Sector Skills Council

Individuals have received the following benefits:

- An alternative, flexible route to obtaining a higher level qualification
- Facilitated up-skilling and career progression
- Improved confidence, motivation and self-esteem
Scenario Two: Brown & Anderson Associates

**Solutions offered:** The initial training needs were identified in an internal employer meeting and explored in more depth with a local college.

The college put forward a range of different training solutions available and in discussions with the company decided on a programme starting with basic Dreamweaver training for a number of the designers. Following this, one designer would have more specific in-depth training to become a fully trained Web Designer.

The college discussed the options available to the organisation for the delivery of the initial Dreamweaver training such as online learning, existing courses or in-house bespoke training.

A flexible learning solution was developed for Brown & Anderson Associates to suit the needs of the business. Based on a full-time HE programme, the college identified skill-sets of two hour chunks of learning that could be offered. These skill-sets could be built up into more complex structures and modules providing a bespoke learning package with credits that map directly to a National Qualifications Framework curriculum.

The organisation’s main concern was around down-time and the core business activities being neglected whilst staff members were training. The college offered a solution to this by placing a HE Student (in their final stages of training) into the company to take some of the workload.

Another risk that was identified was that employees selected for the training may be difficult to engage as many have been out of learning for sometime. It was felt however that the flexible, ‘bite-sized’ chunks of learning that were selected for the solution, would enable them to immerse themselves at a slower pace.

**Benefits** of higher level skills training to the organisation include:

- Cost savings on currently outsourcing web design work
- Increased productivity with new skills
- Ability to accept more work of a broader nature
- More motivated/confident design staff
- Opportunity to promote a full service to clients


**Scenario Three: City Council**

**Solution:** The City Council contacted the local college’s Sport and Exercise Department for help in developing a suitable training solution/qualification.

The needs and requirements for the qualification were further explored by the City Council, the college, and Skills Active the Sector Skills Council for active leisure and learning.

The aim of the programme, learning objectives and content was all developed in consultation with Skills Active and it was decided that a Foundation degree in Community based Exercise and Physical Activity should be developed to suit the needs of the City Council.

The Foundation degree combines the necessary academic and vocational skills alongside the soft skills needed for the role. Students are required to attend college two days a week to receive the academic and underpinning knowledge for the role and are involved in council run projects learning the vocational and soft skills for a further two days a week.

The Council are pleased with the solution and continue to be involved in developing the programme and modifying elements where necessary. They also sit on the Employers Forum.

**Benefits** of the Foundation degree to the City Council include:

- Tailor made programme
- Valuable links with the local college and Sector Skills Council
- Ready made employees for the Physical Activity Coordinator position
Scenario Four: Call to Call Communications

Solution: The employer gateway introduced Call to Call Communications to a number of local universities to see which could provide the best solution.

The Business School from the chosen university worked with the organisation to explore the Account Manager role and competencies, and mapped key areas against academic areas and standards to identify the level of learning most appropriate. It was decided that the most appropriate level would be a Foundation degree and that the course needed would cover Sales Account and Relationship Management.

Key operational staff with subject knowledge were identified to work with the university on the design and development of the programme. The programme objectives, learning outcomes, assessment methods and content of modules were devised. The programme was designed to ensure that learning was aligned to the organisations objectives as well as meeting the academic benchmark standards.

The programme is delivered on Call to Call Communications premises, with the exception of the induction programme which is held at the university. The Foundation degree takes two years to complete and is delivered in a pattern of two consecutive days of workshop delivery per month with independent study and learning in the workplace making up the total study hours.

Benefit: The benefits from this training solution can be seen by both the organisation and individual employees including:

- Reduction in recruitment costs as staff turnover rates amongst talented staff drop and vacancies are filled by internal career progression/promotions
- Increase in shareholder wealth through improved sales revenue
- Increased confidence and motivation of outward-facing staff
- Increased loyalty from staff
- Promoting the organisation as a learning organisation
- Opportunity for individuals to develop and extend educational qualifications
- Motivated employees
- Higher financial bonuses for employees through the internal performance-based bonus scheme

The programme is evaluated and feedback collected from employees taking part to ensure there are no improvements that can be made. Call to Call Communications are currently in discussions with the university to extend programmes to include a progression route to a BA Honours degree from the Foundation degree, and to develop a post graduate option for those members of staff with higher previous qualifications or significant experience.