

Welcome to Issue 3 of Business Focus, specifically written for OCVC's employer customers. In this issue we will look at how a number of local employers are continuing to benefit from developing their staff's skills against a backdrop of a severe deteriorating economic landscape. We also have the results of our recent Ofsted Inspection, which shows further good progression across the college.

Economic Downturn – A Good Time to Invest in Training?

The current economic position is proving to be a once in a generation situation with record low interest rates and unprecedented government borrowing attempting to kick start the UK economy. Whilst government research undertaken in 2007 suggests that firms who cut out training are more than twice as likely to fail as those who did not, it is quite natural for training to be seen as a low priority for those struggling to maintain their customer base.

However the additional flexibilities now offered through the Train to Gain programme mean that an increasing number of your staff would be eligible for NVQ skills training on a fully funded basis. In this issue we report on Turn It On, a software company with existing well qualified staff improving their customer service skills.

We also report on Moss Plastic Parts who are using production downtime in their automotive parts business to train staff in Business Improvement Techniques through the college.

And if the worst happens, we can also help those members of your staff at risk of redundancy. Our Skills for Life team are able to offer short sessions on CV updating, job application writing and interview skills.

If you think we can help your organisation come out of the current economic climate with improved skills and competitiveness or to soften the blow for those leaving your employment, please call the college Employer Hot-Line (01865 551015).

Ofsted Inspection – Progress towards becoming Outstanding

Ofsted undertook a formal inspection of the college during October 2008, its first full inspection for four years. We are pleased to announce that all five key areas for inspection, including effectiveness, quality, success rates and leadership and management were judged to be Good. This demonstrates further continued progression towards our aim of becoming an Outstanding college. Two of the auditors were focused

upon our employer engagement activities and we would like to thank all those employer customers who supported the college in hosting visits and attending the review session at the Oxford Campus. The auditors were very complementary about the delivery, the relationship management, but equally important the commitment you as employers were investing in skills development.

Moss Plastic Parts – Utilising Production Downtime to Train Staff

Despite the gloomy outlook on the economy, Moss Plastic Parts based in Kidlington, are taking the opportunity to develop the skills of their staff and at the same time improve their business performance. Since last summer, around 40 of their staff have been undertaking an NVQ in Business Improvement Techniques (BIT). This qualification, which is being fully funded as part of the Train to Gain programme, includes a range of training to help staff remove waste from the production processes and at the same time improve quality and reduce plant breakdowns.

Dave Walker, Productivity Improvement Manager for Moss Plastics commented: "We are fully committed to supporting the development of our workforce and undertaking the BIT course will also provide these staff with a nationally recognised qualification."



Aiming for the Training Quality Standard

Not satisfied with the good Ofsted result, at OCVC we are working hard to improve our quality processes even further in preparation for a forthcoming Training Quality Standard (TQS) assessment. TQS is a national quality kite mark, initiated at the end of 2007 and available to providers who deliver training to the business community. TQS is backed by the Learning & Skills Council and all the Sector Skills Councils and is a tough

assessment criteria with currently less than 90 successful providers nationwide across all training disciplines. The TQS assessment criteria includes employers being contacted independently (probably in early April) to gauge their willingness to recommend the college to others. Further details will be forwarded to you nearer the time.

Skills Training Doesn't Stop for the Highly Educated

The increased flexibilities of the Train to Gain programme which allows learners with qualifications above 5 GCSE's to obtain funding for NVQs, is aiding training delivery at Turn It On, a local ICT support company. Turn It On, which specialises in ICT support to primary schools across the region, have staff which are already highly qualified, in fact many of them were teachers in previous lives. Bill Wicker ICT Consultant at Turn It On, said: "Our aim is to provide high quality service 100% of the time and we thought that our staff would benefit from receiving Customer Service training".

Around 20 staff at Turn It On have just started a NVQ in Customer Service with the college, with a bespoke two day group training programme designed around their requirements in addition to on site assessment at their customer's premises. Bill Wicker in summing up the benefits of the training said: "We expect this programme to help us win new business and better retain our existing customers, through the service we provide".

Connect Water Systems Has a Thirst for Training

Connect Water Systems is a small but fast growing business based in Bicester and is one of the UK's leading suppliers of mains filtered water coolers and hot water dispensers. It is also an excellent example of how the Train to Gain funding can really energise staff interest in training. 12 of the 18 staff have embarked on NVQs in either Warehousing and Storage or Customer Service and for some of the staff in their 50's is the first formal training they have encountered since leaving school. Other staff have undertaken Microsoft courses at the college and all have the opportunity to improve their literacy and numeracy, again through Train to Gain.

Mick De'Ath, Managing Director at the company said: "Our staff are very competent and knowledgeable but we wanted to provide them with the opportunity to gain qualifications relevant to their job. Excellent customer service is the key thing that sets us apart from our competition, and Train to Gain is helping us ensure we stay ahead of the game and continue to grow our business profitably."

"What quickly became more apparent was the enthusiasm among our staff to improve themselves and their performance. Once we started to discuss NVQ training we were pleasantly surprised at the numbers of staff who wanted to be involved."

Connect Water Systems are not considering this as a "one off" and are already contemplating further progression opportunities when their current qualifications have been completed.



Husband and Wife team, Martin and Sandra Shorter who have completed an NVQ in Warehousing and Storage.

Further Success for Cherwood House

Staff at Cherwood House were celebrating receiving certificates for successfully completing their latest Distance Learning courses last November, from Helen Franklin one of the DL tutors. Cherwood House, a large care home based in Bicester, are one of OCVC's longstanding distance learning customers, regularly undertaking over 30 qualifications a year within a variety of care based disciplines. Mercia Forsyth, the Manager at Cherwood House (seen in the centre of the picture) commented that: "This form of training has really helped to develop the confidence of our team and proves to be a way of retaining our best staff."



New Driving NVQs added to our Portfolio

Fifteen months after the launch of NVQs in Warehousing and Storage from OCVC, we are now able to offer further logistics training solutions in the shape of driver training. OCVC has recently entered into a partnership agreement with JLD, a high quality Banbury based company who specialise in delivering training for those operating Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) and Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV), like buses and coaches. Through our agreement, OCVC is now able to offer NVQ Level 2 qualifications fully funded in the current year through the Train to Gain programme.



With Driver CPC legislation now in place for existing PCV drivers and similar legislation due this September for existing LGV drivers, JLD are also able to support companies meet the implementation of the Periodic Training element of this legislation and are approved by the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT).

Lisa Dixon, Senior Partner at JLD said: "We're delighted to be working with our local college and helping them offer a much wider range of products to both their existing logistics customers and others across the region".

New Dates for One Day Microsoft courses

In the last issue of Business Focus we announced the launch of the OCVC Microsoft Academy and the opportunity to gain some industry leading qualifications through it. Alongside delivery within the workplace, we can now announce a range of dates of specific 1 day courses available at our Oxford campus, each available at a very competitive **£99 per person**.

Course Title	Office 2007	Office 2003
Access Foundation	1 April	24 April
	12 June	26 June
	1 July	
Access Intermediate	4 March	11 March
	15 May	22 May
	10 July	17 July
Excel Foundation	25 March	15 April
	22 April	3 July
	5 June	
	24 June	
Excel Intermediate	13 May	27 March
	8 July	10 June
Powerpoint Foundation	13 March	20 March
	27 May	3 June
	22 July	
Project	8 April	18 March
	17 April	29 May
	19 June	24 July
Word Intermediate	6 March	3 April
	20 May	17 June
	15 July	

To book or for further information please contact Jean Glendinning directly via email – jglendinning@ocvc.ac.uk

Microsoft | IT Academy Programme