



Qube Learning use the Get on at Work approach to successfully deliver Skills for Life qualifications as part of Train to Gain

Matrix: A3, A6, B3, C6, C7

Qube Learning is a private training provider with Train to Gain contracts in the North West, East of England, East Midlands and London. They currently deliver NVQs in Hospitality, Customer Service, Cleaning, Team Leading and Administration and have been successful in delivering Skills for Life qualifications alongside these NVQs.

Engaging employers and employees

Qube have a strong business development mentality, employing Regional Business Development Specialists to directly engage with employers and discuss business needs and offer a Training Needs Analysis. A Regional Qualifications Advisor will then be allocated to a site to engage with the learners on an individual basis to complete the enrolment process, which involves initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and occupational areas. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) plays a key part of this enrolment process. At both stages, discussions are focussed on the needs and aspirations of the learners and employers in their occupational context, reflecting the Get On at Work approach to promoting Skills for Life in the workplace

At enrolment, a SfL course is presented as a positive opportunity to gain additional skills and support in the learning process, and an additional national qualification. The Qualifications Advisors have been trained by Qube's SfL delivery team, including observations of SfL support sessions and highlight the links between SfL, workplace performance and NVQ achievement to both employers and employees. This message is reinforced in Qube's marketing material for employers and learners alike, promoting the benefits enjoyed by similar employers and their workforce who have taken up both NVQs and SfL training.

Qube currently uses Basic Skills Agency Assessments (BSAA) for literacy and numeracy, however the team are also planning to trial the Tools Library Workplace Assessments. Feedback from these BSAA's is given immediately and for anyone showing results at entry level 3 or level 1, a SfL course is offered as an integrated part of the NVQ package. Since the BSAA does not distinguish between levels 1 and 2 the team have to make a judgement based on score, existing qualifications and discussion, to identify learners who are more likely to be of a level 2 standard and therefore would gain less from completing a SfL qualification. Learners scoring at entry levels 1 or 2 are signposted towards local core funded SfL provision and a leaflet is provided with contact details and advice helplines. Qube's experience has shown that when SfL is presented as a positive, integral part of the NVQ package, the uptake of SfL enrolments significantly increases.

Delivering SfL

All delivery is in the workplace and a learner will be visited by both an NVQ and a Skills for Life Learning Advisor. Learning activities are delivered either on a one to one basis or in very small groups and learners can receive up to 15 hours SfL support. Diagnostic assessment using the

DfES materials is carried out at the first session. Vocationally relevant skills checklists are also completed at this session, reinforcing the relevance to work roles and inform the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Vocationally relevant teaching materials, including the DfES embedded learning materials, are used as much as possible. Learners are introduced to the national tests early on and are encouraged to work independently between sessions, using the Move On Learner route, other websites such as Skillswise or from practice papers and other resources, depending on their access to IT. National qualifications examinations are usually taken on-line using City and Guilds GOLLA. As results are immediately available this provides further opportunity for feedback.

Achievements

In the East of England region over the period August 2007 to December 2007, 81% of Qube's SfL leavers achieved either a literacy or numeracy qualification.

Response from employers

"The input and help from Qube Learning in training staff has enabled us to operate in those sites effectively and professionally. It has meant that staff have developed the necessary skills quickly which has had a positive impact on customer service. Our achievers are now not only managers of change, they have become creators of change."

"Joseph Holt has seen excellent success rates in staff achieving literacy and numeracy qualifications. This has improved the confidence and motivation of staff as well as improved communication skills."

"Qube staff are always helpful and supportive."

Edwin Partridge

Human Resources Manager

Joseph Holt

Success Factors

Qube's senior management team have a firm belief in the benefits brought about by learners completing SfL qualifications. This starts with the Managing Director and cascades throughout the management and through all departments within the organisation.

Qube's Managing Director commented

"I believe in the SfL programmes whole heartedly; these skills development programmes make a real and tangible difference to people's lives. The learners achieve a qualification in literacy or numeracy, which in many cases is their first formal academic qualification. Our learners gain in confidence which helps them achieve their NVQ and opens up opportunities both in their work and home lives. From an employer perspective and as an employer myself, improving the literacy and numeracy skills of the workforce can only have positive benefits. Finally in my capacity of

Managing Director I am accountable for the profitability of the business. In pure sales and business development terms SfL enrolments are a cost effective and appropriate method of up selling.”

Challenges / Areas for further development

The challenges for the future are to improve links between vocational Learning Advisors and the SfL team. Qube are working towards further improvements in the delivery of SfL, so that it becomes more embedded and contextualised with the learners NVQ. Both of these challenges are being addressed as part of the QIA Skills for Life Improvement Programme that Qube is currently involved with. Recruitment of SfL Learning Advisors continues to be a challenge; there is a shortage of experienced Skills for Life specialists in the region. Qube has embarked upon a programme of development with qualified NVQ Learning Advisors that wish to deliver SfL.