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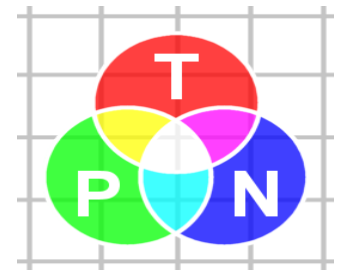
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# Training Provider News



## Skills business and recession

Hi there, how's business? Up until recently almost a courtesy statement from one company to another regardless of the size, the answer until used to be "oh ok / doing fine / mustn't grumble". Now the response is hugely varied from "much better than I thought it would be" to "terrible" or in the words of the chief economist of Lloyds /TSB "GRIM".

Hi there how's your skills shortage ?, again the response used to be "cant get the staff , cant get the right training , too many providers, no clear guidance , don't understand the government schemes , if only they would teach kids how to be prepared for work etc". These responses masked the fact that many businesses, particularly those at the smaller end of the market had failed to prepare for the upturn in the economy and hadn't valued skilled workers enough in the past . Now the trouble is we still don't seem to be able to get the balance right, there will be a huge demand from the hospitality and related industries this summer and are we prepared? I doubt it, the care sector is growing fast and the commitment to skills is only just surfacing as this large and growing aspect of the south west economy starts to creak from under investment in skills and staff development over the years.

There is currently a surplus of construction works and

allied professionals, lawyers, planning officers, quantity surveyor etc. as well as the tradesmen and women and a shortage of Job Centre Plus staff to cope with glut of workers looking for work. Retraining is perceived as only an option for those who can afford it. "Retrain for what?" is the worry often expressed. Human beings who have had the comfort of working for one organisation and industry all their lives are suddenly faced with what they perceive as life changing decisions , which they may see as not good choices . The police are already reporting a surge in acquisitive crime, ( theft to you and me ) always a sign of real recession .Suddenly the black economy is back with us on a greater scale than we have seen for a long time , and the number of individuals wanting to start a business is growing daily as they see this as the only viable alternative to unemployment, a good aspiration, but real professional advice and guidance needs to be given early before these business fail due to lack of proper preparation and understanding of the rough world of self employment .

However all is not GRIM, many companies are trying to develop their staff with skills across a broader spectrum, multi-purpose working is reap-

pearing as a panacea, some apprenticeship courses are full, particularly those in administration and office work, There appears to be some movement in the commercial property markets and a determination by the public sector where possible to bring forward projects that may create jobs.

But there is confusion in the market place, I recently had a large employer complain that the incentives for training appeared not apply to his company and only to smes, and the small companies who simply don't have the resource, time to invest at the moment and perceive the skills agenda as some theoretical issue .Finally there is huge concern over the education act in relation to the 14-19 agenda and the apparent draconian penalties that employers will face if they do not either provide the time for training , or establish the training status of their younger staff and this when making money isn't easy . and is all too apparent even to the economically uneducated amongst us " money makes the world go round"

Jeremy Filmer-Bennett  
Chief Executive  
Devon & Cornwall Business Council

## Is Training a realistic option during a Recession?

The severity of the economic downturn has taken many businesses by surprise. After two years of working to the Leitch agenda and striving to meet the Leitch agenda suddenly we are faced with a significant change of emphasis away from being focused on targets based around the up-skilling of the workforce to having to concentrate on re-skilling parts of those facing challenges in retaining precarious jobs or finding new ones.

Many providers will tell you that the first thing

Many providers will tell you that the first thing many employers cut back on in a recession is their training budgets. As long ago as 2008 a poll of learning and development managers revealed 445 were expecting a reduction in their training budgets in the year ahead, 54% were anticipating staying at about the same level and only 2% expected an increase.

In the face of such changes it be-

comes far more difficult for those in the business of promoting and delivering training to operate. However it is not a totally lost cause. In a letter to the Times the CBI and TUC stated that it is precisely at this time that firms should invest in skills of their staff. That it will be their commitment, productivity and ability to add value that will ensure that companies remain competitive.

Historically, research undertaken between 1998 and 2004 on 1,479 employers has looked closely at the links between training and the closure of businesses. It revealed that whilst 27% of non training establishments closed only 11% of those training closed. Other variables were factored in including size, sector and age, but still a 9% disparity was indicated.

Other studies have suggested that the link is far more complex than a simple causal relationship between training and survival. Factors such

as other progressive management and Human Relations practices appear to be relevant. Careful strategies need to be developed to look at product development, investment, the organisation of work, market positioning. Care is needed to identify the most appropriate skills for employers to bring the strategy to fruition.

What we need is focused training. Expert organisation needs analysis and high quality provision. There has been a debate raging as to whether raising the skills level of the workforce automatically leads to a more productive workforce, as Leitch suggested. One cannot automatically assume that just because somebody has another qualification they become more productive. Consequently, the move to more focused training, the Train to Gain "thin" qualifications, shortly the coming of the Qualifications Credit Framework have to be seen as very important in ensuring that employers get the most appropriate skills in the most effective way.

## IAG

The DCTPN has worked with nextstep to raise the standard of IAG amongst its members, in particular when dealing with the more mature learner who often has different goals and expectations from the younger learners. This work has been supported by the South West lifelong Learning Network who have also been proactive in the development of a range of support material. As the project reaches its end a decision was made to try to pull all the different strands of work which the network has been involved with covering IAG, progression and new qualifications into a more sustainable grouping.

With this in mind the work undertaken over a number of years with Aim Higher, the support materials developed through strand 7, SWLLN's support materials, materials from our work with ENTO around the Matrix standard, the excellent

progression information that has been built up through the AdvAnce project have been linked more closely. A new IAG link to the website and the VLE combining much of this and links to specialist IAG resources has been developed for us by Paul Richards to provide a virtual one stop repository for both IAG staff and learners. By using a VLE link it enables us to keep all of our resources up to date rather than issuing memory sticks which are out of date within a week. The site has been well received by the IAG champions and hopefully will be well used. The coming of the new QCF adds some urgency to the need for providers to really get on top of this key aspect of our work.

With the development of the Area Wide Prospectuses, the advent of the new Foundation Learning Tier, Unitisation and the Apprentice framework overhaul there is plenty for us to

keep working on. If the work is done well then retention rates, success rates and progression rates will all reflect the service, in tough economic times none of us can afford not to get involved.

The results from the AdvAnce project which has now been underway for nearly two years are extremely encouraging. For the last full year the IAG interviews on completing Advanced Apprentices indicated that 38% have aspirations to move forward onto Higher qualifications. Whilst it remains to be seen how many actually do progress what the data very clearly shows is that the learners are being given ongoing IAG throughout their programmes which is resulting in a far greater awareness of the options of Higher Education than previously. The network is building a section of case studies of those who have progressed, if you do have any examples please forward them to Craig Marshall for inclusion on the site.

# Working Links

In April 2000 Working Links was born. They were the first public, private, voluntary partnership in the UK. Since its launch, Working Links has helped over 100,000 people into work, and their South West operation has contributed to over 9,000 of these success stories.

This organisation is playing an increasingly important part in the South West region's turnaround.

Working Links not only delivers contracts covering Cornwall, Plymouth and Devon but also in Bristol, Bath, Weston Super Mare, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Wiltshire.

From these locations, Working Links delivers a suite of contracts: Employment Zone, Progress to Work, Pathways to Work, Skills for Jobs in Bristol and Devon, and also ESF-funded programmes – Cornwall Works Plus and Torbay Works.

As well as being Employment specialists, they understand that a job is not always the route out of poverty. Poorly paid, low skilled and insecure work can mean that welfare dependency is simply replaced by either in-work benefit dependency or intermittent periods of low quality work and unemployment. Working Links' innovative skills programmes aim to change lives and create futures by supporting their clients over the long term to improve their skills and progress in their job.

One of the ways they tackle the skills shortfall is through their Skills-

mart retail courses - a fully comprehensive range of courses in retail, incorporating all the skills necessary to work effectively within the retail sector. This creative programme is designed to meet the needs of employers and to allow learners to gain skills and confidence to use in both retail employment and everyday life, so they're ready to work within the sector.

Working Links understands the benefits of harnessing the power of partnership working. By working closely with employers, providers and many other partner organisations they now help one person get back into work every eight minutes. Their Devon Skills for jobs contract is an excellent example of this, where they work alongside and manage fifteen different sub contractors. These contracts take referrals from a host of different organisations and together they share some of the highest job retention and loyalty rates.

In 2008 Working Links' unique partnership with Plymouth Works and Jobcentre Plus celebrated success for its work helping unemployed people claiming health-related benefits. They got together to mark the fact that they had helped hundreds of people who had been considered economically inactive. It marked

yet another success for partnership working in the South West.

As the market that they operate in changes, the organisation is evolving too. They're tackling big issues and reaching more people. While their role as a leading welfare to work organisation strengthens, they are forging ahead in other sectors too.

Their very successful programme for supporting ex-offenders across Warbarth, Cornwall is a representation of just that – having scooped two prestigious awards. In 2007, the programme won the National Criminal Justice Award as well as being recognised by the Howard League for Penal Reform in the national Outstanding Scheme Awards.

This year Working Links has been working more extensively in nurseries, schools, family and community centres, and in prisons to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in society. This means that they are better placed to help people improve their skills and move into jobs with a real future. Therefore it is no surprise that the South West operation is one of the most successful Welfare to Work providers for helping Lone Parents back to work.

For more information contact Working Links, Plymouth on 01752 672 007, or visit [www.workinglinks.co.uk](http://www.workinglinks.co.uk)

## Staff e development

David Rowe

If you are an e-guide, a personal development advisor (PDA), an e-learning champion, a senior manager or just someone with an interest in e-learning, you will probably have experienced a wide variety of responses when working with colleagues, staff and at times yourself, to develop e-learning materials or delivery systems. The most common reason quoted is of course lack of time; the typical assessor/tutor has a workload focused on getting the candidate to achieve the target NVQ or qualification, this intense focus can at times drive innovation but more usually acts as a brake as staff naturally rely on tried and trusted methods/materials and create what is in effect a cyclical self fulfilling prophecy i.e. I know how to use these methods to produce the results required of me. In some organisations any attempt to break this cycle is viewed with suspicion based on the view that it will mean extra work, un-necessary complication and removal from a comforts zone which of course invokes the fear factor. However, within organisations that have tackled this problem successfully, there is a view, to which I firmly subscribe, that one way to break the cycle is to get people to achieve quick wins in the form of small improvements. Bite sized learning objects perhaps, getting candidates to e-mail images or sound files as evidence, in fact anything which gets the employee to focus on a particular problem or theory which has always proved something of an obstacle to progress in the past. These quick wins can be facilitated by the use of open source content creation systems I have mentioned in previous articles i.e. Exe.Learning, Xerte, Glo Maker etc or by the use of other

easy to use programmes like Audacity for sound files or Veotag for tagging evidence as it relates to that required by an NVQ. One other approach could be to purchase an organisational licence to a commercial suite of programmes like Articulate. I know a small number of providers have used programmes like these and have had mixed experiences; how

ever, if all employees were to have access to such a system it would at least ensure some level of consistency. It is a simple matter in many of the programmes to create a corporate template, which can move the level of consistency to a higher level.

Although the use of small quick wins might just lead to the long term embedding of e-learning within an employee's delivery, it may or may not move the whole organisation forward in terms of meeting the demands of government policy. Organisational change requires the development, implementation and evaluation of a properly formulated staff development programme although it may not actually be called this. Even so there may be some members of staff who for whatever reason will not want to take part. In this case a level of firm direction is required. In the words of one provider I spoke to recently "I have had to tell some staff. If you are not on board the e-learning ship which is now sailing we may have to cast you adrift, as this is now embedded as company policy and you need to be on-board". A bit drastic you may say, but entirely justified in my view in the circumstances that most providers now find themselves.

What you may ask does a staff development plan look like or

consist of? Basically it is a list of objectives and activities designed to achieve these; however, these activities cannot really be planned until you know what e-skills the staff have or do not have. One good place to start is the e-Skills Survey offered by the RSC, this can of course be used to compare existing e-skills with those you think staff may need in the near future. The staff e-skills Staff Survey service offered by the RSC is carried out on-line via Survey Monkey, the results can be made available to all or to a selected audience and the questions can be tailored to the organisational need.

Once you know what skills the staff have, it is a relatively simple task to create a shopping list of staff development sessions, aimed at addressing the needs identified in the survey. You might also want to look at

using the system to look at the e-skills of learners, which might inform your approach to what developments in the use of technology might be the most fruitful. There are lots of resources available to assist in the process which may negate the need to buy in training expertise. One well established source is the e-Skills CD resource. This can be issued to staff who can dip in and out of the development activities to suit the time and opportunities available, copies of this CD are available from your WBL e-Learning Adviser. Whilst this is a good start it may be necessary to look at other resources or formal qualifications like ECDL or ITQ. For further information why not talk to your WBL e-learning Adviser.

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# Are You Addicted to 'E's?

Roy Stephenson

Every page you turn, every report you see all that jumps from the page is – e-learning, e-portfolios, e-tools, e-technology – e-haw – What are we doing? Where are we going?

As you are aware there is a vast amount of support from government agencies to ensure that all training establishments embrace the move to e-maturity. But are we really being effective in enhancing the learning experience. Some of the tools and software programs will prove to be constructive and provide alternative options of learning and will support the trainer in their practise but some of it will not.

Those last few words, especially for smaller providers, can be the real issue. How much do you spend to experience a potential failure? Yes you can attend seminars and experience training on the new e-tools but much of what I have seen is centred on colleges and they can afford to see failures and experiment with new ideas and concepts. However, they do tend to lead innovation and have successes that are transferable and it is well worth listening to their concepts and views.

RSC SW (JISC) is one of the principal activators and if you are considering technological advances it would be a good idea to obtain their view and expert knowledge. David Rowe and the team have been invaluable in our move towards e-maturity.

With current funding opportunities through courses with NIACE, CEL and direct support from Becta and LSC (LIG, Capacity) monies are available but be careful, consider wisely what you want to purchase. Unfortunately you tend to be pressurised in spending the funding in a short period of time – you usually are required to provide a wish list and then a timescale to buy and confirm purchase. What you don't get is time to analyse the effectiveness of what you have purchased.

A principle point to consider is the

development of an ILT strategy, which must be a working document. With changes in technology, increased funding, your strategy keeps evolving and becomes a 'journey' as opposed to a vision. Also it takes longer to implement than you think! The biggest consideration is the acceptance of change by all staff. Time and effective support must be directed in developing not only skills but an understanding of why this e-learning strategy is being considered and introduced. Involve the staff in any new process to move towards acceptance – without this, the implementation can become more exacting.

How has Academy of Training progressed within the e-maturity concept? Yes we have an e-portfolio system (eNVQ), which provides for more effective training / assessing and is accepted by both trainers and learners as a quality working practise. This was a good place to start and helped introduce the 'e' movement in the company. Another important element that is currently being developed is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE – Moodle) and this has taken much longer to establish than originally planned and awhile yet before it becomes a useful tool for all clients.

Impact of technology – with the usage of an e-portfolio system there has been a real positive effect on reducing (practically eliminating) out of funders but it is not always easy to identify what material changes have been achieved. Very often any improvement is related to several measures / changes introduced and to isolate the e-improvements may provide uncertain qualitative information. Academy is presently working with David Rowe to establish appropriate measures to help identify the e-impact.

What equipment do you provide to your trainers? For mobility there is a requirement for a laptop with connectivity (3G), digital recorder, camera, mobile phone (with e-mail ac

cessibility). The latter piece of equipment can incorporate some of the other functions. However, do not just provide the equipment and say – "here you are now get on with it". You must provide guidance on use and continuous support otherwise any new gadget will not be used efficiently and may result in frustration and disinterest.

Though there is a need to introduce technology, as mentioned previously there is need to have the correct and sustainable support in translating the new ideas and/ or technology into understandable language to the non-techno person. Someone with an IT background and an understanding of new developments is an essential part of your e-maturity growth.

The employment of an 'IT Guru' is one of the principle costs that can be attributed to e-growth. However, the actual cost to a business of supporting this growth, through training, meetings and development time can easily equate to at least 25% of the technology purchased. As we all know time is money and that definition alone can cause delayed integration. Nevertheless once established the benefits will start accruing and like anything in life to gain you must go through the inevitable pain.

With QCF on the horizon, embracing e-maturity will help in providing a remote structure that will help sustain the new unitised framework. So hit on those 'e's they are not going away and embracing them will ensure that you maintain your competitive edge. Caution – do not overdose and become addicted, always carefully re-read the instructions on the bottle (your ILT Strategy).

Roy Stephenson

Academy of Training  
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Or phone

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*Have you a favourite IT project or idea you have never got around to exploring properly let alone developing?*

*Or, an idea for learning material which would support your learners but not sure how to develop it?*

*Or, do you want to develop a Moodle based VLE but not sure how to go about it or identify the resource you would need?*

Well, there may be a workable solution to hand. Following discussions with the Employer Liaison Officer at the University of Exeter, we are looking for short term placements for 2<sup>nd</sup> or penultimate year degree IT students.

Work placements for these HE students have been available for some time through the well known Shell STEP programme which typically allows the student to spend up to 13 weeks on work placements with a host organisation during the summer break. However, these students will also now be available for short term placements perhaps over the Easter break and may be available to continue the same project or another one over the summer vacation and during their studies contributing towards their degree. Historically HE students have been placed with IT based companies and these have resulted in very suc-

cessful collaborations. Whilst it is true that one or two forward thinking Work-based training providers have taken up similar opportunities in the past, it would seem that this potentially important resource has been underexploited.

However, with the growth in the need for populating VLE's, creating learning material and general development of IT based infrastructure, including student records, e-portfolios etc there would seem to be many more opportunities than was previously obvious to use the capabilities of these students.

**What does the WBL provider get out of the deal?**

An enthusiastic, IT dedicated member of staff - albeit a very temporary and inexpensive one - with bang up to date IT skills. Perhaps not completely fully-formed but extremely usable certainly, who can be targeted at that e-learning development you have always said you would get around to.

**What does the learner get out of the deal?**

- Experience of a real world working environment.
- The invaluable opportunity to work for managers who need them to perform well and quickly within real deadlines.
- The opportunity to

develop their skills in perhaps an area they had not thought about or been aware of.

- The opportunity to develop a project/service / system or range of learning materials based on the real world needs of an employer, which can be used to illustrate abilities and current relevant skills to prospective employers in the near future.

For further information please contact:  
Jane Gill, Employer Liaison Officer, University of Exeter Careers and Employment Service, Kay Building North Park Road, Exeter EX4 4QF  
Tel: 01392 263844 J. Gill@exeter.ac.uk  
<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/business/talent/projects.html>  
Diane Rees BA, Placements Officer, Faculty of Technology Industrial Placement Unit, Smeaton 006 University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA  
Tel: 01752 586032/586007/232555  
Fax:01752 586003  
[www.plymouth.ac.uk/placements](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/placements) Or

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work based learning programme.

The event is being partly sponsored by Aim Higher, the South West Life Long Learning Network, BL Peninsula and the local Chamber of Commerce. Our thanks to all of those bodies.

**Celebrating Success**

. The Plymouth TPN's annual awards ceremony will be taking place again this year on Wednesday March 25th at the University of Plymouth's Sherwell Centre on North Hill. It will start at 7.00 p.m.

This year there will be

four categories. The overall Apprentice of the Year, the outstanding apprentice who has progressed on to Higher Education; the Train to Gain learner of the year and lastly a new category, the outstanding mature learner to progress on to Higher Education from any

Have you visited our website?

[www.training-provider.com](http://www.training-provider.com)

**DCTPN Meetings 10.00 – 2.00**

3rd April  
Exeter College

July 3rd  
Ultra Bodmin

October 2nd  
Plymouth

**Financial Champions Training 13th March**

**a.m. at**

**Focus Training**

**Peer**

**Referencing**

**Conference**

March 19th

10.00—2.00

at

Ultra

Bodmin

## Training Quality Standard – Do you, don't you? Simon Deane

Having recently received certification in the Training Quality Standard with Excellence in Accounting been a CoVE in Accounting, a number of colleague providers have asked us whether it is worth undertaking and how difficult the process was to achieve it. We have also had a few providers from elsewhere in the country, come and see us to discuss the process in detail. My answer in short (which for those of you who know me is not like me!) is "It was for us".

However, each provider needs to weigh up the costs and benefits to their own organisation. To a certain extent, the benefits are what you make of them and you should plan to derive as many benefits as you can. We were fortunate insofar as we were a CoVE and the costs of accreditation were reduced significantly for those applying for certification prior to 31.3.08

### The benefits

1. The process is self reflective. As with your SAR, you have to critically review what you do and, as importantly, why you do it. It does make you question your existing processes as well as your business strategy. In particular it makes you question how you engage with employers and makes you realise how much more you could be doing – not just in terms of the quality of your delivery but also in identifying other business opportunities
2. Provided you don't look at it all as a compliance process, then it provides the opportunity to make real improvements in your employer engagement processes. The verifiers are very experienced and can

give you valuable insights into your business

3. It is *not* an Ofsted inspection!
4. The employer validation process saves you the need to repeat the process as part of Framework for Excellence
5. The verification process engaged a lot of staff and thereby increased their awareness of the importance of employer engagement. There is a danger of them getting lost in the mechanics of our training delivery and forgetting why we are doing it and who for.
6. The feedback and action plan has given us some very useful goals to achieve over the coming year
7. The added credibility with e.g. the LSC and other bodies
8. You can add the TQS logo to your letterhead, documentation, website and any other publicity material
9. You get nice things to stick on your wall - a very pretty plaque for Part A and a nice framed certificate for Part B
10. Everybody in the organisation got a huge buzz out of being successful and out of being "recognised" for the quality of their efforts. To be honest, the pretty plaques on the wall are as much for them as for visitors. We have bought additional ones for our other venues to ensure *all staff* share in the

recognition of their success.

### The costs

Application fees – Part A £5,000; Part B £2,500

Time – Staffing of the process set out below

Time - Spent writing, reviewing and editing the application form.

(Mind you this was *lots* of time – but no *actual* cost as I did it evening and weekends!?!)

Overall, not a cheap process to undertake

### The process

1. Submit an expression of interest
2. Attend a 2 day training session
3. Panic
4. Decide on whether to submit Part A and Part B or just Part A  
Part A is about your engagement with employers. Part B is about your engagement with sector. If you are engaged with more than one occupation sector you can submit more than one Part B. You don't have to submit a Part B or you can submit a Part B in the year following your Part A submission. You can have a Part A without a Part B but not vice versa

Draft the application form (max of 50 pages for Part A and 25 pages for Part B)

5. Wish you had started the process a year earlier
6. Application undergoes a desk based assessment and if it is okay and does go through then move on

## Training Quality Standard – Do you, don't you? Cont'd

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>7. Possible request to supply additional information / amendments and if ok -</p>   | <p>Harvard Net Promoter scoring system is used: 9 or 10 counts as 1 point; 7 or 8 counts as 0 points; 1 to 6 counts as minus 1 point. Scary – doesn't sound fair really! One is required to achieve at least a positive score. If ok –</p>   | <p>new at the first visit have since become embedded. Deferral requires resubmission of the application once key identified procedures have been established.</p>  |
| <p>8. On site "Verification" visit performed. The purpose of this visit is to verify the assertions made, and evidence referred to, in the application. NB No additional evidence will be recognised – so if you didn't refer to it in your application, the verifiers will not given any recognition to it, even if they fall over it the moment they arrive. This process is very rigorous and the verifiers are experienced inspectors/verifiers. You will be advised whether you are successful, a few days after the visit. If ok -</p> | <p>10. The provisional decision goes to a Panel, which reviews the evidence, decides on a final decision and notifies you</p>  | <p>The key factor to bear in mind is that the TQS process is all about the quality of your Employer Engagement. It is not, per se, about the quality of your training or how wonderful your learners think you are. It is also about your employers' perception of the quality of your support and the cost effectiveness of your training – not <i>your</i> perception. I did a very clever little calculation (and a well established one) to show the financial benefit of training staff versus not training them (based on the differential charge out rates and productivity achieved in a firm of accountants. Very clever, but a complete waste of time! What was wanted by the verifiers was simply feedback via our employer surveys (or other means) on <i>their</i> evaluation of the training accessed.</p> |
| <p>9. Validation process performed – a very large sample of your employers are telephoned with the question "On a scale of 1 to 10 how likely are you to recommend this provider to other employers?" The</p>  | <p>11. Emit a huge sigh of relief - phew!</p> <p>12. A wrap-up visit is performed by the verifier to run through the written feedback, including the validation scores, and agree the resultant action plan.</p> <p>13. Certification can be unconditional, conditional or deferred. Conditional requires a subsequent verification visit after e.g. 9 months to confirm that key procedures that might have been fairly</p> | <p>Simon Deane,<br/>Accountancy Plus (Training) Ltd,<br/>Simon@aplustraining.co.uk</p>   |

## EDI Endorsement of bespoke training programmes

Employers, training providers, colleges, schools and universities who wish to invest in the development of their staff may find that accredited qualifications are not always entirely appropriate as they are not tailored to the specific needs of the business. By applying to EDI for endorsement, organisations can achieve formal recognition for their in-house programmes. EDI will ensure the programmes meet certain standards in terms of structure, content, learning outcomes, assessment and quality assurance.

- Evidence of external quality assurance and independent audit

- Evidence of external quality assurance and independent audit
  - Enhanced value of programmes
  - Online registration and certification claim
  - Increased motivation of learners
  - Improved recruitment and retention on to programmes
  - Learner certificates issued by a nationally accredited awarding body

An opportunity to enhance employee skills, reduce staff turnover and increase productivity

EDI can also provide a service of mapping the programme to national occupational standards which have been developed and agreed by employers within specific sectors in the UK.

Where an organisation does not already have a training programme, EDI can help to develop one from scratch, customised to the organisation's needs but based on national occupational standards.

For further information, please telephone the EDI enquiries team on 08707 202 909 or email enquiries@ediplc.com.

## Forthcoming Training Events

The network has run numerous training events in the last month and has a several more sessions:

13th March Financial Awareness company champions training (2 further dates to follow one on the North Devon/Cornwall border, one in Exeter)

19th March Peer Referencing Conference at Ultra Training Bodmin

19th March Actor Factor Assessor Training Glazebrook Hotel South Brent

23rd April Using Mentor's to support ITT internal Learners Training Venue TBC

Following on last months sessions on Functional Skills Training 2 more events are currently being arranged, they will be:

a. Functional Skills in the FLT  
b. Functional Skills in Apprenticeships

6th April LSIS (CEL) Digital Dividends course (Day 2) at Accountancy Plus

If you are interested in attending any of these free sessions please contact Helen Keats [Helen@trainingprovider.com](mailto:Helen@trainingprovider.com)

## The Leadership and Management Advisory Service

Up to £1,000 funding to capitalise on the leadership and management potential within your business

### Who can benefit?

Any owner, director or manager who wishes to fully exploit their capabilities and talents as a business leader will gain competitive advantage from the Leadership and Management Advisory Service.

### How does it work?

An individual is assigned a specialist adviser who will carry out a review of their existing leadership and management capabilities. The adviser will then prepare a complimentary Personal Development Plan (PDP) for them, addressing key development requirements in relation to the needs of the business or the opportunity available.

Once agreed, the adviser will broker in suitable training/coaching providers and any necessary development activities, covering areas such as:

- Leadership or management workshops
- Leadership or management qualifications
- Bespoke training or coaching

- Bespoke training or coaching
- Business mentoring
- Higher education qualifications (funding for this must be matched pound for pound)

Up to £1,000 of grant funding can be applied for. The first £500 is fully funded, and is for use only by owners, directors, and managers with a strategic role in the business. A further £500 is also available, if matched pound for pound by the business. This can be used by the same beneficiary of the first £500, or by any other member of the management team (note that all grants are exclusive of VAT).

### What are the benefits?

- Develops key entrepreneurial leadership and management skills
- Funding has been shown to have a major impact on improving productivity, profitability and increasing sales
- Provides the opportunity to access a broader range of skills development support

### What are the costs?

There is no charge for the support in preparing the PDP or for either Business Link or Train to Gain sourcing suitable providers and training solutions.

### What eligibility criteria are there?

- Your business should employ between 5 and 249 people (including volunteers)
- You should pay for and commence any activities within 90 days of the grant being approved
- Specific exclusions: membership fees, travel and subsistence, statutory and mandatory training, e.g. health & safety, assessment/ accreditation for Investors in People or ISO, capital equipment, business accommodation costs or use in conjunction with any other LSC or European Social Fund funding streams.

**To take advantage of this service:**

**Telephone: 08456 047 047**

**E-mail: [LMAS@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:LMAS@businesslinksw.co.uk)**

**Or visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)**

## FLT

The term Foundation Learning Tier has come to be understood as referring to the reforms of learning programmes at entry & level 1, including Entry to Employment (E2E). The entry and level 1 of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) are also described as the FLT. Progression Pathways set down the parameters for designing personalised learning programmes to support individual progression through the achievement of an appropriate combination of qualifications from entry and level 1 of the QCF.

So how does this affect providers? Very few are involved in the E2E programme, level 1 funding is limited and so many might feel that these changes do not apply to them. However as QCF replaces existing qualifications over the next 15 months the focus will become clearer. For those involved in working with schools on initiatives such as the Tamar Valley Consortium the impact is obvious. In order to meet the huge increased targets for apprentice recruitment most providers are actually aware that there are simply not enough learners who are at the correct level to progress onto them to make the numbers add up. The FLT will become the key

link. With the raising of the school leaving/training age starting in then the numbers required to train will rise sharply, and those who are currently NEET or in jobs without training will come into our scope. Again the FLT will be the key delivery vehicle. In order for providers to be in a position to meet these needs strategic decisions need to be taken now.

There are four progression pathways:

The progression pathway to a first full level 2 (in QCF)

The progression pathway to skilled work or an apprenticeship

The progression pathway to supported employment or independent living

The progression pathway to a foundation diploma or GCSE's

The first three are focused on the post 16 sector; the last one will involve link-ins with schools.

If there is to be such a focus on the personalised learning of the pathways it will come as no surprise to providers that they are going to have to undertake any effective initial assessment to enable them

to identify the key starting point for the learning to start from, as well as providing detailed ongoing reviews to ensure that the initial work was correct. Allied to this is going to have to be a flexible, in-depth Information, Advice and Guidance system that links in with the key progression emphasis of the pathways. The LSC has already laid down very high progression targets for the pathways so the focus has to be there from the outset.

The fact that the Foundation Learning Tier will be subject to Ofsted inspection will not come as a surprise to most providers, but there needs to be an awareness that this will include areas such as the Tamar Valley Consortium and other working with schools.

For those who need to do a bit more reading I suggest the following:

The LSC Prospectus for progression Pathways:

<http://qtr.lsc.gov.uk/flt/support>

A quick guide to post 16 FLT Support Programmes

<http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk>

Resources

<http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk/document.asp?id=244>

## QCF and MIS

A group of DCTPN providers have engaged on a QCF project to help them prepare for the coming of the QCF. The group decided to focus on their individual Management Information Systems (MIS), agreeing to audit their MIS systems to determine if they could cope with the changes demanded by QCF and other reforms being planned. The providers agreed to:

§ Review the likely impact of the QCF and other reforms on their MIS systems and to bring the outcomes to the next project meeting.

§ To use this information to develop one collective checklist of what needed to be done in order to be ready to implement the changes necessary

§ To carry out individual audits using the checklist to determine priorities for action

Having completed their audit they found a number of key questions which were felt to be common to all:

• Could existing software systems handle the new demands that will be made on it by the QCF and its related reforms?

- What would be MIS staffing and implementation costs of having to implement necessary change?
- § How could they raise awareness of QCF without increasing staff anxieties about the level of change required?

They identified common issues about how MIS and ITC would be affected by the change and the group drew up a comprehensive list of the areas of activity where change would have to take place. The key issue in developing the checklist was the proviso that key elements of the reforms, particularly unit funding, were not yet in place. The checklist was developed to help them plan for the known, but also to determine what areas of activity still required further clarification. The group agreed to trial the checklist based before the final project meeting. This would enable them to begin to plan for what they could plan for and consider the 'unknown's carefully.

The common issues raised by the audit which need to be considered by all providers were as follows:

- Software suppliers are working towards developing systems to embrace the QCF, but there were worries they might not be ready in time. Providers need to ensure they follow their supplier's software development closely.
- § Providers should explore their existing software's capacity to record units and see if these can be developed further.
- § There will be a transitional period when NQF and QCF qualifications will need to be recorded in the same year. This needs to be planned for carefully.
- § Where QCF qualifications are offered within a partnership, particular in Diploma consortiums, decisions will have to be made about who will keep central data on unit/qualification achievements.
- § Because units are of varying sizes, providers will need to consider 'cash flow' issues and how Skills Accounts will impact on providers' overall funding.

The work has thrown up more questions than answers but at least we now know the questions we need to be asking.

# Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS)

## Quality improvement events 2009

City & Guilds is committed to providing continued support and guidance to our centres, to assist you in your delivery of our qualifications. As part of our ongoing support to existing and potential new centres, we have developed a programme of new national quality improvement events for QTLS. This will enable us to communicate with you and offer guidance and advice as necessary.

Please find below our events programme for 2009 relating to QTLS. If you are interested in attending any of these events and wish to book a place for yourself or your colleagues, please contact Lorraine King either by email at [lorraine.king@cityandguilds.com](mailto:lorraine.king@cityandguilds.com) or telephone 01924 206761.

## Getting started with the level 3 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) award

This event is for organisations wishing to deliver the City & Guilds level 3 PTLLS award (7303) that have not been involved in delivering teacher education to date. This award forms part of the new national Initial Teacher Training reforms 2007. This event is also suitable for existing centres that may have new staff delivering or intending to deliver the level 3 PTLLS award, or for centres that have traditionally delivered the Learning and Development NVQ (7318), and now wish to make the change.

The aim of the event is to allow delegates the opportunity to learn more about the award, its aims and objectives, its content and models of delivery (in respect of assessment and observation requirements).

### Dates Venue

**23 March 2009** London

**01 April 2009** Warrington

**02 April 2009** London

**Price:** £100 per delegate

### Professional Formation

This event is for anyone registered with the Institute for Learning and considering preparing to apply for Professional Formation through the Institute for Learning. The aim of the event is to offer delegates the opportunity to learn more about Professional Formation, the standards expected and the process and evidence requirements for application.

### Dates Venue

**07 May 2009** Taunton

**10 July 2009** London

**17 July 2009** London

**Price:** £100 per delegate

## Preparing your workforce development strategy to embrace the new 2007 Initial Teacher Training Reforms

We will be holding a series of national events in 2009 for college principals, vice principals, company directors/managers and Human Resource managers who want to build up their workforce development strategies to embrace the 2007 Initial Teacher Training reforms and related requirements.

The day will include coverage of the following:

An update on the ITT Regulations and Reforms.

Supporting qualified staff to apply for Professional Formation .

Supporting staff applying for General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills/B4 Route.

Developing an effective workforce development strategy which effectively supports teaching staff to achieve QTLS/ATLS status.

### Dates Venue

**15 June 2009** Wakefield

**26 June 2009** London

**24 July 2009** London

**Price:** £100 per delegate

## B4 General Professional Recognition Learning & Skills (GPRLS)

We will be holding a series of national events in 2009, for anyone registered with the Institute for Learning who is considering preparing to apply for QTLS/ATLS via the GPRLS/B4 route. This route has been designed to enable competent and experienced teachers to be recognised as having professional standing, where undertaking an Initial Teacher Training qualification would be inappropriate.

This event will give delegates the opportunity to learn more about GPRLS/B4, the standards expected and the process and evidence requirements for application.

## Book your place

To book your place you will need to complete a booking form. Booking forms can be downloaded from the events pages of our website or by contacting the Events Coordinator Lorraine King by email at [lorraine.king@cityandguilds.com](mailto:lorraine.king@cityandguilds.com) or telephone 01924 206761.

For more information about the Initial Teacher Training qualifications visit our dedicated site:

[www.cityandguilds.com/qtls](http://www.cityandguilds.com/qtls)

# Strategies for Leadership and Management Development in the Economic Downturn

Strong leaders and managers who inspire and motivate their employees are at the heart of every successful business, small or large. The importance of training leaders and managers to reach their full potential is therefore critical to harness strong and effective business leadership and this has been central to a £9m investment made by the Learning and Skills Council, over the next 3 years, for the new Leadership and Management Advisory Service (LMAS).

Through Train to Gain, LMAS will give over 8,000 business owners and senior managers the opportunity to develop their leadership and management skills through a development solution that can be completely tailored to the business and to best suit the needs of the individuals involved.

Grants of up to £1000, with an employer contribution of £500 are available to put South West SMEs in the driving seat, enabling them to identify the training that will make a serious difference to the performance of their business.

The Government's new package of support for SMEs is extending the leadership and management programme to 5 – 250 employees so that more private sector businesses can benefit from it. 70% of companies in the South West have less than 250 staff and it is imperative that, at this time of economic challenge, company resources are focused on ensuring they remain successful day to day.

The funding can then be used to access any support or training which has been identified in the owner or senior manager's personal development plan. This can include coaching, mentoring, qualifications and non-qualification based training.

"Key owners and senior managers have the strategic overview of the business and will consequently recognise that the value gained by their own development will also seek out training and development for others in the workforce available through Train to Gain." said Marion Sweet, the LSC's SW Skills Development Manager for Train to Gain Policy and Leadership and Management.

She continued: "This is a journey which can include innovative and challenging opportunities which ensure that leadership and management thrives rather than just survives!"

This is a critical time for providers to ensure they can offer employers a wide variety of leadership and management development solutions to meet their current needs.

The LSC is holding a series of 'Strategies for Leadership and Management Development in the Economic Downturn' events across the region for providers who are involved in delivering leadership and management development to SMEs.

These events will give providers the opportunity to receive an update on the 'leading edge' information on what works in leadership and management development, how it should be delivered and how providers can benchmark their provision to improve flexibility to help employers address the critical business issues they are facing in the current climate.

If you are interested in attending one of the events further details are available from your partnership manager

The LMAS service is accessed through Train to Gain or organisations can also be referred to LMAS via a referral basis by Skills Brokers, Training Providers, Business Link, and Sector Skills Councils or accessed directly by employers.

## DCTPN membership

Acacia Training	Hazel Lessiter	Hazel.lessiter@acaciatrng.co.uk
Academy for Training & Dev	Dave Badcock	dave@academy4u.co.uk
Academy of Training	Chris Jeffery	chris.jeffery@academyoftraining.co.uk
Accountancy +	Simon Deane	simon@aplustraining.co.uk
Access Training	Gerald Banks	Gerald.banks@accesstraining.co.uk
Achievement Training	Lorna Livesey	lornalivesey@achievementtraining.com
Bicton College	Alan Johnson	ajohnson@bicton.ac.uk
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Claro Training	Jo Bourton	contactus@clarotraining.com
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Cornwall Neighbourhood for Change	Andrew Aitchison	andrew@cn4c.org.uk
Devon & Cornwall Electrical	David Bassett	david.bassett@dcet.co.uk
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