

# TRAIN TO GAIN NEWS

April 2008

Issue 6

Welcome to the latest edition of Train to Gain News – here you will find out:

- How Leadership and Management opportunities could benefit your business
- Why a printing business has put training at the top of its agenda
- How a small grocery business ensures its customers stay loyal

## Train to Gain

It's never been easier for companies to find the right training for their staff. Managed by the Learning and Skills Council, Train to Gain is the Government's flagship service to support employers in England, of all sizes and in all sectors, to improve the skills of their employees, unlock talent and drive improved business performance.

The Service provides quality assured advice in identifying skills needs at all levels and helps to identify and source appropriate training and qualifications to meet those skills needs.

To book your visit from a skills broker – call 0800 015 55 45, or please [click here](#)



**“Sales for this year have increased a lot. Training has sharpened our awareness of our customers’ needs and we’ve converted sales that we wouldn’t have had this time a year ago.”**

Kevin Groom  
Branch Manager, Martins World Travel



### Editorial

Train to Gain is all about working with employers to help businesses get the skills they need to compete in the global economy.

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### Three-way view

An employer, skills broker and training provider talk about the benefits of training staff at a family-owned publishing and printing company.

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### 60 Second Interview

Train to Gain is helping employers to improve their efficiency, productivity and staff retention, says Robin Clarkson, Vice Chair of the Skills Brokerage Association.

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### Q & A

Train to Gain skills broker Amber Kelly offers advice on how a small grocery business can ensure its customers stay loyal.

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## Leadership and Management training achieves results – from improved productivity to greater profitability.

Train to Gain is all about working with employers to make sure businesses all over the country have the skills they need to compete in the global economy. It's about equipping businesses with skills at all levels – from Skills for Life and Level 2, the equivalent to five GCSEs A\*-C, through to higher level skills like Leadership and Management training and degrees.



One of the many ways in which the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) flagship service is helping employers is through its innovative Leadership and Management programme.

The expansion of Train to Gain, announced in November 2007, included a massive boost for Leadership and Management training. This will help Senior Managers and Managing Directors employing between 10 and 249 employees get the training they need to succeed. Between now and 2010 we will be working with up to 60,000 businesses – a third of the entire small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) population in England.

If you are the Owner or Senior Manager of a business in that size range and haven't benefited from the programme in the past the LSC is keen to work with you. It may be that you have great technical skills but you simply haven't had the time or opportunity to think about how you lead, manage and invest in your workforce.

Our Leadership and Management advisers will help you put together a Personal Development Plan, give specialist support and advice and find appropriate training, from formal courses leading to qualifications to coaching and mentoring, one-off training sessions or ongoing private tuition. Depending on your eligibility, you could receive funding of up to £1,000.

The evaluations we have done have been very positive and show that Leadership and Management training achieves impressive results – like improved productivity, profitability and sales. Nearly three-quarters of employers who have taken part have increased their investment in training and 85 per cent said they were prepared to invest additional money to fund skills solutions.

The LSC is also broadening the Level 3 (equivalent to two A levels) offer for businesses to provide enhanced technical or supervisory skills. In order to compete on the global stage we need to have a competitive edge. By focusing on Level 3 and offering heavily subsidised provision to employers, Train to Gain is helping people develop skills that improve the productivity of the business they work for. It's a win-win situation. Businesses benefit from more productive staff and the country benefits from better qualified people.

**Sarah Millett, Senior Policy Manager**  
Train to Gain, Learning and Skills Council

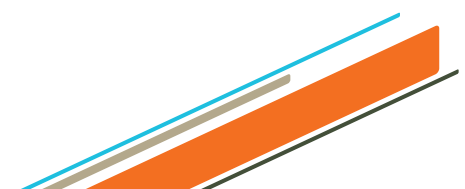
**“Training enhances people's skills, which in turn impacts on the way they do their job.”**

**Mark Walker**  
Health, Safety and Training Manager, BUPA Care Homes

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Three-way view

**An employer, skills broker and training provider talk about the benefits of training.**



Michael Gill, HR Manager, Mortons of Horncastle

Mortons of Horncastle is a family-owned publishing and printing company. Founded in the 19th Century, the Lincolnshire-based business publishes magazines like *Classic Racer* and *Motor Cycle Monthly* and prints a wide range of newspapers. The company employs 240 staff, including printers, graphic artists,

designers and journalists, and is firmly committed to training. It achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1997 and made the Skills Pledge at the national launch with Gordon Brown in June 2007.

Continues...

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## An employer, skills broker and training provider talk about the benefits of training (...continued)

### The employer

**Michael Gill, HR Manager, Mortons of Horncastle**

“We have a long history of training at Mortons and give it a high profile. We want people to come and work with us and believe that training helps our staff to recognise their abilities and achievements. About 20 people have gained qualifications through Train to Gain so far. Some have done Skills for Life qualifications and others have achieved Level 2 in Pre-Press.

**“The company gains at several different levels from training our staff. People grow in confidence and are more engaged in what they are doing.”**

“Our absence levels and staff turnover are also very low and as we are in the process of updating and replacing our pre-press operating systems this year so implementation will be easier and more efficient. We are building up a pool of people with skills and qualifications and are now looking to do more Leadership and Management training.”

### The skills broker

**Sally Walker, Train to Gain skills broker, East Midlands Business**

“Mortons is the sort of organisation which knows that people are its greatest asset. Training and development have always been right at the top of the company’s agenda and they believe that better skills provide them with innumerable benefits. The print business is highly competitive but they are an exemplary company and go from strength to strength.”

### The training provider

**Laura Wade, NVQ Co-ordinator, National Printing Skills Centre, Leicester College**

“We have six full-time assessors who deliver the training. All of us have worked in the print industry and really understand the business so we are able to say ‘have you thought about



Laura Wade, NVQ Co-ordinator  
National Printing Skills Centre, Leicester College

doing it this way?’ As a company, Mortons is very enthusiastic and focused about training and liked the fact that the training we offered was flexible, delivered on-site and fitted in with production schedules. The Mortons employees were trained in Pre-Press, Machine Printing and Digital Artwork. They were very engaged and were pleased to gain a qualification at the end of it too.”

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## 60 Second Interview – with Robin Clarkson

Robin Clarkson is Assistant Director of Prevista, a London-based consultancy which offers skills brokerage advice and training solutions to businesses of all sizes and sectors. Prevista is one of three skills brokerage contractors appointed to deliver Train to Gain in London. Robin is also Vice Chair of the Skills Brokerage Association.

### What do businesses gain from training their staff?



Robin Clarkson  
Assistant Director, Prevista

Research shows 1.3 million people go to work every day without the skills they need to do their job effectively. Train to Gain instils in employers the idea that if you train your staff and get into the culture and cycle of investing in staff development you will get a return. Employers are seeing benefits like improvements in efficiency and productivity and increased staff morale, loyalty and retention.

### What do skills brokers do?

Train to Gain is very much about what the employer wants. That's the real key. When our skills brokers meet employers they have a really open agenda and talk about the benefits of investing in training and skills development. Most employers agree there is something they can improve on, whether its nationally accredited qualifications at Level 2 (the equivalent of five good GCSEs) or Level 3 (two A levels) and above, time management or finding a facilitator to help develop the senior management team, as well as industry recognised, legislative or other development specific to individual sectors.

### How do skills brokers find the right training provision for employers?

There are 162 training provider consortia currently contracted to deliver Train to Gain in London. Our 12 skills brokers have really good sector knowledge and are professionally accredited themselves. When they go and talk to a road haulage operator, for instance, they know what they are

talking about. They know the language, the industry, the issues that worry employers and the training that is available and beneficial.

### Do employers come back to you for further advice on training?

We work with some employers continually – either due to their size or their desire to do more training. We worked with one small courier firm where there was only one employee who had forklift truck training and he was coming up to retirement, which was a serious issue for them and money was tight. We sorted out this initial issue with two employees gaining a fully-funded forklift qualification and the firm has since come back for more training, including Leadership and Management.

### How many employers have you supported through Train to Gain?

In the last two years we have supported more than 2,500 employers in London. We have also approved nearly 300 Leadership and Management grants to senior people in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Robin recently took part in a web TV chat about Train to Gain with Jaine Clarke, Director of Corporate Communications at the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and Jennifer Allen, Marketing Director for The Hardy Group, a London-based print and contract publishing company. It can be viewed at [www.webchats.tv](http://www.webchats.tv)



**“We’re working much more effectively as a team now, supporting our General Manager and each other. The training has inspired us to share ideas more and to be more creative in tackling challenges.”**

Emese Szanti  
Human Resources Manager, Mandeville Hotel

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## How can I ensure customers stay loyal to our shop?

The owner of a small grocery business asks Train to Gain skills broker Amber Kelly for advice.



Amber Kelly, Train to Gain skills broker

**I run a small grocery shop with 15 employees. Another convenience store is about to open opposite us and I am concerned that our trade may be affected. What can I do to ensure that customers stay loyal to our shop?**

Training staff has a real impact on business. Investing in the skills levels of your employees will improve their customer service as well as increase their morale and willingness to take on more responsibility. In turn, customers will be more likely to return to your shop if the service they receive is better and more personal than your new rival store.

Finding the time and money to train employees can seem like an uphill struggle for busy retailers but the Train to Gain service, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is on hand to ease employers' concerns and help you through the process.

As part of Train to Gain, a local skills broker will come and assess your individual business needs – at no cost to you. After a full skills audit, your skills broker will suggest relevant training options and pinpoint any funding you may be eligible for. The advice offered will be tailored to the needs of your business and training may be conducted on-site to minimise disruption.

Through Train to Gain, your employees can access a wide range of qualifications and training courses. It may be appropriate, for instance, for some of your employees to work towards a qualification in Customer Service or Business Administration. This could help improve the day-to-day running of your shop and provide a better experience for customers.

Research has found that skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on the productivity and competitiveness of small and large retailers alike. Using Train to Gain will help to give your business the edge it needs to succeed in the face of new competition.

To find out how Train to Gain could help your business, visit [traintogain.gov.uk](http://traintogain.gov.uk) or call 0800 015 55 45.

**Amber Kelly**  
Train to Gain skills broker



**Training enabled me to not only meet my development goals, but also resulted in real strategic and structural improvement in my organisation.**

**Pamela Ball**  
Chief Executive, Advocacy West Lancs

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