



...PROOF THAT TRAINING PAYS

Caroline Brown, HR Manager at Balfour Kilpatrick tells us how training has led to both planned and unexpected benefits...

This is what we do...

We already have a strong history of apprenticeship training, but in recent years the range of development opportunities available right across the business has really grown:

- We encourage our apprentices and staff to obtain professional qualifications and support them through to HNC and degree level qualifications.
- In 2007 we launched the in-house Project Leadership Diploma for all project managers, senior engineers and senior quantity surveyors. This consists of a five day residential course supported by four additional modules covering commercial through to planning skills over a six to 12 month period.
- We train all of our supervisors through our PPP (People, Productivity, Performance) working group on an annual basis. The training usually involves up to two days per year covering development of personal and business critical process skills.

Training works for us. Here's why...

Our learning culture has developed with an increase in trainees over the last two years. But also from a commercial viewpoint, we are actively growing the



future talent of the business. Through structured training plans and ongoing reviews these trainees soon become productive employees.

We believe the loyalty of trainees and the roles they quickly adopt as mentors for others provides evident value, albeit intangible.

Our advice to others...

Ultimately the value of investing in training is not one that can be quickly realised – it's not a quick fix.

But we have gone through a transition in our approach to training and have learned lessons about getting it right – we've become more sophisticated and aware of what our business needs as we aim to maximise the return on the investment.

The case in point

Increasing our trainee intake led to an unexpected positive effect – it kick-started the natural coaching and mentoring skills of our line managers.

To meet the demands of the training scheme reviews, they had to up-skill. We ensured they were 100% involved in helping the trainee think about what skills they needed both from a technical and core competency perspective.

Through asking them to assess others abilities we have, by default, introduced line managers to the language and requirements of our competency structure. It is a great example of gaining two positive outputs when we only aimed for one!

To gain from the process, you have to be clear about what you want the end outputs to be. It has to be much more than just paper qualifications, the investment must be holistic to mould the employee into the person your business needs for the future.

It's the skills and attitude of our people that give us a competitive edge, so in our training choices we work hard to make sure trainees develop the attitude and core competencies we want to see in them as they progress.



What a Good Day means to us...

I think a good day for us is when every member of our team leaves work believing they have given their best to the company that day, and that we have given them something in return.

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