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As the recession tightens its vice-like grip on Britain, organisations have started making cutbacks in order to survive. Unfortunately for some, such things as training budgets are one of the first things to go, which could in fact be a crucial mistake.

On staff training during an economical crisis LSC Chairman, Chris Banks says:

'Making sure that your staff are equipped with the right skills is critical to helping your business survive in these tough times.'

Inside this issue we take a closer look at our online CPD audit tool which is currently piloting in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber, the public sector Train to Gain brokerage and much, much more.

Hope you enjoy this issue!

Stacey Redman, Editor



Case Studies

If you and your organisation would like to feature in one of our case studies and possibly be included in one of our bi-yearly newsletters please contact either Stacey Redman or Ashleigh Dalton on:

01904 612 231

Alternatively you can email STAR at:

star@star-tc.co.uk



Latest News

Business Interchange

Business Interchange is a government funded programme that aims to help the learning and skills sector adopt business placements for teachers as a sustainable method of CPD. Business Interchange ensures that teachers' vocational skills are kept current, that providers are employer responsive and ultimately that learning provision stays razor sharp and industry relevant. Appointed by LLUK, STAR provides a national co-ordinator service to support organisations to undertake Business Interchange. If you are a publically funded, post 16, training provider and would like information please contact Ashleigh Dalton on:

01904 612 231

or visit www.businessinterchange.org

Public Sector Brokerage

STAR has been providing consultancy support to the Public Sector as a Train to Gain Broker in Yorkshire and Humber for over a year now. The service has assisted over 98 public sector organisations to identify their training needs, find appropriate training provision and possible funding. Yorkshire is one of only 2 regions where all Local Authorities have signed the skills pledge. For more details on how Leeds City Council found the service please see [page 6](#). If you would like more information about how this service can help you please contact Lee Reddington on:

01904 612 231

Skills Audit Tool

STAR has been providing online tools to the public sector for over 6 years. Our online training needs analysis system for schools and the Wider Children's Workforce is being used by Local Authorities throughout the UK. We have recently embarked on a pilot to assist public sector organisations within Yorkshire and Humber and the North East to fulfil the skills pledge, to find out more about the pilot please see [page 3 and 4](#). If you would like more information about our online tools and how they could help you please contact John Smith on:

01904 612 231

School Support Staff Qualifications

STAR is currently delivering qualifications for school support staff including the Parent Support Advisor VQ, Support Work in Schools VQ, Supporting Teaching and Learning NVQ and more nationally. Our learner achievement rate is 80% and the results of our latest employer survey show 96% feel we meet their needs. More information on the Parent Support Advisor VQ is available on [page 5](#). For further information on our training delivery please contact Mark Bradbury on:

01904 612 231

How utilising STAR's online audit tool 2develop is assisting the public sector to meet the Skills Pledge

STAR has been providing consultancy support to the public sector as a Train to Gain broker in Yorkshire and Humber for little over a year. The brokerage service aims to assist public sector organisations to make and meet the Skills Pledge through assisting training needs analysis, action planning, sourcing of training provision and possible funding.



Early on in the consultancy process STAR found that many organisations, particularly Local Authorities were finding it difficult to analyse training needs due to their size and complexity. They were therefore concerned about their ability to meet the Skills Pledge and other initiatives.

At this time STAR met with the local employer partnerships in Yorkshire and Humber and the North East regions LGYH (Local Government Yorkshire and Humber) and NEREO (North East Regional Employers Organisation) to form an informal partnership agreement for working with the public sector. In response to the feedback received, STAR offered to assist by offering the use of our online tool, 2develop for a pilot.

2develop is a practical and easy to use online system that can be tailored to meet the needs of any organisation. This electronic portal enables organisations to easily capture information about their workforce by using a series of bespoke questionnaires. The tool then automatically correlates the data to provide organisations with the entire workforce data.

Currently Sheffield City Council, Sunderland City Council and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service are piloting the tool. This includes an 'About You' questionnaire which captures data including individual age, ethnicity, highest level of qualification achieved etc and an 'Essential Skills' literacy and numeracy audit.

Other features the tool can also include:

- Job role analysis against a specified job description



Public Sector Online CPD Audit

- Training needs analysis against various qualifications and frameworks
- Organisational needs analysis against quality standards including IIP and EFQM
- Action planning
- CPD recording

Training and Development Consultant at Sunderland City Council, Cathy Mordecai said:

'Out of the first 400 people, who completed the questionnaires, 50 expressed an interest in brushing up on their English and 94 on their Maths. This may not have occurred to them as they went about their daily work. 2develop has been a really successful way of stimulating interest and helping us to meet our Skills Pledge.'

As a result of the ongoing pilots with the aforementioned organisations STAR was approached by Middlesbrough Local Authority's Social Care Department regarding their obligation to report on the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care to Skills for Care.

The Social Care Department is required to log information regarding their workforce on the Skills for Care system which is an online web-based tool. However before this can be done all the information needs to be collated together, which is where they felt STAR's audit tool would be useful.

STAR is currently working with the Authority to create a tool that meets the criteria that they require in order to meet the requirements for reporting to Skills for Care. The project is in its beginning stages but will be up and running in the near future.

STAR is looking to fully evaluate the pilots over the summer once the full audit is complete.

If you would like more information or advice on this online tool please contact STAR on:
01904 612 231



Case Study

Parent Support Advisors in North Yorkshire

In January 2008 a new endorsed pathway was introduced within the Support Work in Schools qualification (SWiS). This was due to a new Parent Support Advisor (PSA) role emerging within schools that called for a broader spectrum of training. STAR, having been involved with the SWiS qualification since its pilot stage in 2004, was asked to deliver the new OCR pilot VQ SWiS (PSA) qualification throughout the schools in North Yorkshire. STAR is currently supporting candidates from Newcastle to Kent as they work through their PSA VQs.

Lisa Smith, a PSA based at Harrogate High School, was asked to do the qualification for her new role as an advisor. She was one of the first to complete back in April 2008, putting a lot of time and effort in to finish before she went on maternity leave. Lisa feels that the knowledge and understanding she needs to fulfil her role has been strengthened by doing this qualification. It has helped her reflect on her practice within her advisor role.

Lisa said:

'I really enjoyed completing my VQ, which was mainly down to my assessor Naomi Wardman who was really supportive and kept me focused. For me this wasn't just about professional development, it was about developing myself as a person too. I now have a qualification that proves I am competent in all aspects of my role and it has helped me develop my work greatly.'



Jane Gibbins, a Parent Support Advisor at Skipton's Parish Primary School was also one of the first candidates to complete the qualification, she is now thinking about progressing onto a level 4 qualification. She had nothing but good things to say about completing her Diploma through STAR:

'My confidence has been greatly boosted since completing my VQ; I have had lots of great comments from my colleagues. Naomi, my assessor has been a powerful encouragement and has shown a high level of commitment to me to succeed. I am so grateful for her knowledge, professionalism and friendly personality.'

STAR assessor Naomi Wardman said:

'Despite many personal obstacles standing in her path, Jane persisted and worked extremely hard to complete in such a short time frame. This qualification has proved that she is a brilliant PSA.'

If you would like any more information please do not
hesitate to contact STAR on:

01904 612 231



Enhancing Skills within Leeds City Council

In November 2008, Leeds City Council signed the Skills Pledge – A pledge to their employees to invest in their skills by training them up to at least a level 2 standard.

In response to this, Train to Gain Skills Broker Lee Reddington was assigned to them in a bid to help gauge exactly what training was required – A challenging task in such a large organisation.

Lee encouraged the council to carry out a whole-staff survey in order to check qualification levels. As a result of this, large groups of staff who did not hold level 2 qualifications were highlighted. This meant that attention to training could be given where needed.

The council then provided Lee with a ‘Wish List’ of courses that employees were interested in. He then set about identifying suitable providers and possible funding. After a series of interviews, the council selected 9 providers consisting of both private companies and local colleges. Lee also helped the council to access funding in the region of £1.7 million to date.

Regarding the Train to Gain service, Corporate HR Manager Jill Gibbons said:

‘Lee helped us to begin the Skills Pledge process and to find providers who have proved very able to supply relevant training and assessment in the workplace. The initiative has really helped us to meet the needs of ‘large front line staff groups’.’

A full evaluation is yet to be carried out but an increased level of confidence and interest in



further training has been immediately apparent in the learners.

‘The initiative has strongly encouraged us to review employees’ qualification levels and target access to NVQs and associated training.’

If you would like more information on the Public Sector Train to Gain service please contact an advisor on:

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