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Train to Gain Helps Businesses of all Sizes Fight Recession

-Train to Gain helps Derbyshire bakers use their loaf-

Business leaders have hailed the Government's flagship Train to Gain programme, saying it has helped them provide vital training to their staff during the downturn.

Both large and small businesses have reaped the benefits of Government funded training support, which is backed up by figures released today by the Learning and Skills Council.

In a survey of employers who use the training initiative, 80 per cent said they were likely to recommend Train to Gain to other employers and use it again themselves. A significant number of employers (41 per cent) also said Train to Gain had helped them cope with the recession.

One East Midlands company who has benefited from the Train to Gain service is www.kempsbakery.co.uk and shop in Eckington, Derbyshire. When Rob Clarke and Nigel Holmes bought Kemps five years ago, the initial thought was to let out the premises to another craft baker or convert the property to another use.

Rob explained: "It didn't take us long to realise what a following Kemps had and that it was potentially a little goldmine. Two years down the line, I gave up a well-paid managerial job, a final salary pension and a company car with Nigel also going part-time from his job working with South Yorkshire Police."

With no formal bakery training, Rob and Nigel discovered how the regional Business Link service could help when they were looking for training opportunities for their staff and considering converting a former slaughter house in their backyard to expand the bakery.

Skills Minister Kevin Brennan said: “These reports show that businesses value the chance to offer staff high quality training, that they otherwise may not have been able to, through Train to Gain.

“Thousands of businesses and tens of thousands of employees have benefited from the improved skills delivered by our Train to Gain programme. This is crucial for the long term strength of the economy and the ability of individuals to fulfil their potential.

“The fact that so many learners and employers understand how vital skills and training can be shows how effective our support has been during difficult economic times. We remain committed to ensuring that as many people as possible get the skills they need to benefit from the opportunities of growth.”

Rob continued: “Business Link introduced us to Train to Gain, an impartial service that helps firms find the right training for their business by assessing their skill requirements and accessing a range of subsidised or free, publicly funded skills programmes, Kemps have secured free on-site NVQ training for five of its team.

“And whilst Paul, our principal baker, has 20 years experience, we can’t rely on just the strength of his technical skills forever, especially as we’ve got plans to expand our retail business to hotels and restaurants, as well as diversifying into providing outside catering and buffet lunches.”

With Kemps successfully opening their second shop in Swallownest, coupled with its prime location and complete renovation programme, the Derbyshire business looks set to meet turnover targets well ahead of time.

Geoff Russell, Chief Executive of the LSC, said: “This report shows that businesses have used Train to Gain to equip their employees with vital skills that have had a direct impact on their productivity. This is a critical business benefit in tough economic times.

“Workplace training has never been more responsive or flexible to the needs of employers and it is gratifying that more employers recognise the benefits of training their staff so they

have a skilled workforce, ready for the upturn. The direct benefit to their business productivity and their employees is clear.”

The employer report also found:

- Train to Gain continues to perform highly in encouraging employers to engage with training and development of staff.
- Employers have been able to train more staff and give them access to higher quality qualifications than they would have done otherwise.
- A high number of employers said Train to Gain helped them engage in training and development of their staff.

The learner report found:

- Employees’ satisfaction with Train to Gain remained high with more than 90 per cent pleased with their training.
- Nearly 90 per cent of learners said they hoped to get a qualification at the end of their training, with 85 per cent looking for skills that would look good in the future and improved their ability to do their job.
- The recession is having a positive impact on employee attitudes towards training making them keen to boost their chances in an unpredictable economic climate.

The Train to Gain evaluation report follows the recent “Going for Growth” and “Skills for Growth” strategies. These detail how the Government is continuing to invest in skills in order to help drive economic growth and productivity as the country emerges from recession.

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Notes to editors

1. Today the Learning and Skills Council have published the following reports on Train to Gain, which can be found in the research section at www.lsc.gov.uk.
Train to Gain Learner Evaluation: Report from Wave 5 Research
Train to Gain Employer Evaluation: Sweep 5 Research Report.
2. Managed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), 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. A key element of Train to Gain are skills brokers who offer employers impartial advice and at no cost, helping them to find the best training solution from high-quality and responsive training.

3. Train to Gain was launched in 2006. Train to Gain is now part of the Solutions for Business portfolio - a streamlined suite of government-funded support products for businesses accessible via Business Link.
 - Train to Gain is key to implementing the plans in *Skills for Growth* and the Government's ambitions to focus more of the skills budget on the areas of the economy which can do most to drive growth and jobs. Train to Gain offers eligible employers funding for Skills for Life, first full qualifications at work mainly at levels 2 and 3, and leadership and management training for SMEs.
 - Through the Business Link and providers' brokerage services, employers can access advice about how to improve the skills of their employees and the productivity of their business.
4. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published *Skills for Growth – the National Skills Strategy* in November 2009, which sets out an ambitious vision for giving people and businesses the skills they need to help drive economic growth. The Government will create a modern class of technicians through a dramatic expansion of advanced apprenticeships, creating 35,000 new places over the next two years. For further information, see: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/skillsforgrowth>
5. For more information contact BIS press office on 020 7215 5951.

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