

PRESS RELEASE

BUSINESS GIFT FOR OVER 200 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRMS

6 AUGUST 2007

Staff at Raunds Co-op near Wellingborough joined the party to celebrate the first anniversary of Train to Gain, a service funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to help businesses succeed.

Raunds Co-op is one of over 200 organisations from across Northamptonshire to benefit from Train to Gain during the past year. The service aims to help companies identify and fill skills gaps within their workforce. It offers them the chance to use the skills of a specialist Skills Broker to improve their business performance by training their employees. Over 1,900 employees from across Northamptonshire have accessed training worth over £2million during the past 12 months.

Eight employees at Raunds Co-op have started NVQ Level 2 in retail and business administration – without leaving the premises. All the teaching has occurred at the store at times to suit both the business and the learners

Rachael Stevens, Office Manager at Raunds Co-op, said:

“We are a small independent firm and we don’t have a huge training budget so when we were told there was funding available we thought great. We wanted to encourage younger members of staff to improve their skills and enhance their career prospects. We have five members of staff from the food store doing NVQ Level 2 retail and three

on the NVQ Level 2 business administration which will help, especially in terms of customer service.”

Train to Gain Skills Broker Matthew Croxon said:

“Rachael and store manager, Mark Freeman had a clear vision of how they wanted to help their team to develop their skills. After an initial skills assessment, Leicester College have put a package of training together to help employees to achieve nationally recognised qualifications in a range of roles across the store.

Matthew added:

“All companies in Northamptonshire can access the Train to Gain service either by taking the Skills Pledge - a campaign to inspire people to improve their skills - or by contacting the Train to Gain helpline direct. Developing skills across the county is vital if we are to increase productivity, support advances in enterprise and innovation and improve our economic well being.”

Wendy Lomas, from Leicester College, said:

“Since the initial referral from the Train to Gain brokers, we have worked closely with the management and employees to provide training to meet a variety of business needs.”

“The college’s experience as a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Retail means that it is aware of the challenges facing retailers and the need for flexibility. This is why all teaching has occurred in the workplace at the time to suit the business and learners including evenings and weekends.”

For more information on Train to Gain telephone 0845 057 1817, text TRAIN to 64446, register at www.iwanttotrain.com or visit www.traintogain.gov.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Photographs of staff from Raunds Co-op celebrating the Train to Gain birthday are available. Contact Helen Clarke at GNN or download from www.gnn.gov.uk
2. Train to Gain is a service run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Train to Gain aims to improve productivity and competitiveness by making sure employees have the right skills to do the right job through: an organisational needs analysis, by making recommendations on the most relevant training and providing best value for money.
3. The brokerage service for Train to Gain in the East Midlands is provided under contract to the LSC, by East Midlands Business Ltd (EMB); a joint venture partnership formed by Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Chambers of Commerce.
4. The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006, warned that the UK must 'raise its game' on skills at all levels if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy. The Skills Pledge fulfils a key recommendation made in the review, at the heart of a new 'deal' where employers will be able to shape the skills system to meet their needs, in return for prioritising skills training at all levels.
5. The Skills Pledge is a voluntary commitment by employers to increasing the skills of their workforce for the benefit of the business.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL BY
GOVERNMENT NEWS NETWORK EAST MIDLANDS. FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT HELEN CLARKE AT GNN ON 0115 971 2787**