

HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE YOUR STAFF HAVE THE RIGHT SKILLS TO DO THE BEST JOB?

Effective training brings:

- increased productivity leading to increased competitiveness
- improved customer service skills leading to increased sales and customer loyalty
- greater staff satisfaction and motivation leading to improved staff retention.

This is one of the key challenges for businesses today when skills shortages threaten productivity, reduce competitiveness and demotivate staff.

Everyone recognises the value of training in overcoming skills shortages but, when it comes to your business, how do you make sure you choose the right training and support for your business at the right price?

Train to Gain is a service to help your business get the training it needs to succeed. It can improve your productivity and competitiveness by making sure your staff have the right skills to do the best job.

The UK is the fourth largest economy in the world but its prosperity has been constrained by its relatively poor skills base.
Skills in the UK: The long-term challenge, Leitch Interim Report 2005.

The Train to Gain service is designed to help businesses like yours solve the problems you might face when thinking about identifying training needs and choosing the right solutions.



CHALLENGE

"I know we need to improve the skills of our staff, but how do I work out what training we need?"

SOLUTION

Train to Gain gives your business a completely impartial, free and independent skills needs analysis to identify what skills your business needs now and in the future.

"There are so many training providers... how do I choose the right one for us?"

Train to Gain helps you choose the most suitable training providers. It gives you a recommendation for the skills training solutions that are best for your business. Remember that the skills assessment and recommendation are free and completely impartial so you can be reassured that you are getting the best advice.

"I need to make sure we get the best return on investment in training. Where should we spend our money?"

Train to Gain helps you get the best value for money from your investment. As well as helping you find the best training solutions, the service also identifies the best way to pay for the training by identifying and recommending any funding that's available, such as Government funding, EU funding and local council funding.

Skills gaps cost £10 billion in lost revenue per year – that's the equivalent of £165,000 for a typical business with 50 employees. *National Audit Office.*

£23.5 billion – the amount employers in England and Wales spend on training annually (according to the CBI).

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THE TRAIN TO GAIN SERVICE

Train to Gain offers impartial advice, matches training needs with training providers and makes sure that training and support are delivered to meet your objectives.



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A new service based on proven results

Train to Gain is a new service run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the organisation responsible for delivering the Government's skills strategy in England.

It's based on the highly successful Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) that have been running since 2003. Through these pilots, over 27,000 employers have benefited from the advice and guidance of Skills Brokers, enabling them to find and fund training that has met their business objectives. More than 90% of employers involved in ETPs were extremely satisfied with the service and the way it focused on their needs. You can find out more about the LSC and the Government's skills strategy at www.lsc.gov.uk

What Train to Gain gives you

Train to Gain can improve your productivity and competitiveness by making sure your employees have the right skills to do the best job.

There are three key ways it does this:

- through a skills needs analysis that assesses your organisational training needs (for now and for the future)
- by making recommendations on the most suitable training providers and support services available
- by helping you get the best value for money from your investment in training, including helping you choose the best way to pay for your training.

Skills needs analysis

Skills needs analysis is entirely free. It's provided by Train to Gain Skills Brokers who are independent and impartial organisations and individuals that have been contracted to offer Train to Gain services. They work to national standards and have the flexibility to provide impartial, independent and comprehensive advice on a wide range of training and business development needs, as well as being able to bring in additional specialist advice if it is needed.

The skills needs analysis is an impartial assessment to identify what skills your business needs now and in the future. It can include the development of a business case for training across different skills areas, such as Skills for Life (basic literacy and numeracy training), job-specific training, from basic to advanced, and compliance training.

Training recommendations

Based on their analysis and your support to their plan, Train to Gain Skills Brokers put together a set of recommendations to help you find and fund the right skills training for your business. Depending on your business needs, they will:

- contact training providers
- design and cost integrated training packages
- recommend the most appropriate training providers by reviewing the courses offered
- suggest other sources of skills and development support and advice outside the training sector, if relevant.

The training the Skills Brokers recommend could range from improving skills to gaining professional, industry-recognised qualifications.

Best value for money from your investment

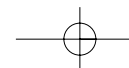
There are many sources of funding available and it can be difficult for businesses to work out what suits them best. The Train to Gain Skills Broker will help you choose the best way to pay for your training by identifying what funding is available, and where your business might have to pay for training itself.

The role of the Skills Broker does not end when your employees start their training: they will continue to help you evaluate the effectiveness of the training so that you get the best value for money from your investment.

Train to Gain funding

As well as helping businesses access other sources of funding and support, the Train to Gain service can provide some funding itself. The following list gives brief details: your Skills Broker will be able to explain all the funding options and what might be available to you in your area.

- Free training to help employees gain their first, full Level 2 qualification – free for employers and employees. Includes training towards five GCSEs at grade C or above and NVQ Level 2.
- A wide range of training for low skills staff, such as Skills for Life.
- Possibility of wage compensation for companies with less than 50 employees.
- Some funding for training to help employees gain Level 3 qualifications (two A Level passes or equivalent) or for non-qualification based training.
- Local training funding details.



TRAIN TO GAIN MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Train to Gain contracted providers

Training providers who deliver services for Train to Gain are contracted by the Learning and Skills Council and:

- are focused on the needs of business, which includes being flexible about the timing, place and pace of training
- employ staff with recent experience of the business sector they serve
- are prepared to work with businesses to design tailored training programmes.

Impartiality of Train to Gain skills analysis

An important feature of Train to Gain is that Skills Brokers are not restricted to using just Train to Gain training providers when they make their training recommendations. If the training needs of your business would be best met by a training provider from a wider choice, the Skills Broker will still offer advice on using alternative training providers. This means you can always be sure that the training recommendations are completely impartial and based on the training solutions that are most suitable for your business.



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Train to Gain quality assurance

The LSC will continually monitor:

- Skills Brokers to ensure they are providing the kind of independent, impartial and comprehensive advice that employers needs
- contracted training providers to ensure they remain focused on the needs of the business.



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“As a smaller company, one of our biggest barriers to workforce development is the cost of giving people time off work to study and learn. Now that problem is eliminated altogether.”

Gary Wales
Company Secretary

Case study: **Petersen Stainless Rigging Ltd**
Business sector: **Manufacturing**
Employees: **5 – 49**
Region: **North East**

Business profile

Petersen Stainless Rigging Ltd, based in Blaydon, Gateshead, is a specialist in manufacturing and developing stainless steel and rigging products for the marine industry and for architectural use.

The challenge

With a growing commitment to workforce development, Petersen wanted to identify what basic skills its staff lacked, and to address those training needs. But training always meant expensive absences when staff attended courses. “As a smaller company... we feel the pinch of absences more than most,” said Company Secretary Gary Wales.

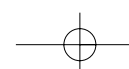
The solution

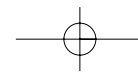
Through Business Link, Petersen found help through their ETP, a programme that has now developed into the new national Train to Gain service. The service helped analyse what training would best benefit their staff, and set this up through the Sunderland Engineering Training Association.

Support and funding gave Petersen not only free workplace training for staff, but also reimbursement for the cost of wages when they were away learning.

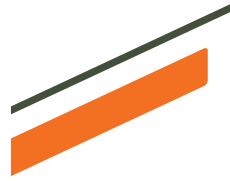
The results

- Day-to-day finances aren't affected by the training, so one of the biggest barriers to workforce development – the cost of absences – was removed.
- Sixteen employees (nearly half the workforce) have funding to see them through their NVQ Level 2 engineering production qualifications.
- The company is benefiting from improving skill levels, which will aid productivity.
- Supporting Petersen's ongoing training needs will help the company plan for the future.





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Q: When does Train to Gain launch?

The full launch of Train to Gain will be in August 2006. At that stage, the service will become available nationwide to employers of all sizes. Before then, existing ETP schemes (from April 2006) will become part of Train to Gain and share the knowledge and best practices they've developed with the new Train to Gain Skills Brokers.

Q: My business is already working with a Skills Broker through an ETP – does Train to Gain affect this?

No – the launch of Train to Gain does not change or stop any existing relationships or training programmes through ETPs.

Q: What happens if I'm already working with a training provider I trust?

Train to Gain will not affect your existing relationship; please continue working with the training provider you trust.

Q: Will I always get funding?

In some cases, you may not be able to get funding. There are a number of reasons for this, such as the type of training you want.

Your Skills Broker will advise you if funding will not be available. If it is not available, you need to decide for yourself how best to pay for training.

Find out more
Visit the Train to Gain website at
www.traintogain.gov.uk

