

**BUSINESS SECTOR: TRANSPORT**  
**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 120**  
**REGION: LONDON**

Menzies Aviation's Connect2Work/T5 team specialises in providing bus services right around the clock for passengers, airport staff and airline crew at Heathrow Airport.



**“The drivers’ professionalism has increased. Previously they were uncomfortable talking to passengers, but now they have the skills to be able to greet them and communicate with ease.”**

Jean Drayton  
 Training Officer  
 Menzies Aviation

### The challenge

In 2006 Menzies Aviation secured a significant contract win from the British Airports Authority to provide bus services at London's Heathrow Airport. One of the conditions of the new contract required bus drivers from the Connect2Work/T5 team to gain an NVQ Level 2 qualification in Customer Service.

Training Officer Jean Drayton said: “The qualification was a requirement of the new contract, but to us it was much more than that. The company management saw this as an ideal opportunity to develop staff. Our buses are usually manned by just one person

who is responsible for driving the bus and looking after the needs of all customers. Many of our drivers lacked confidence in communicating with passengers, so we saw the Train to Gain programme as a great way to improve their motivation and skills in dealing with customers.”

The Connect2Work/T5 workforce consists of full-time bus drivers and contract personnel who are supplied by local agencies. The combination of a 24-hour shift system and a high turnover rate meant that there was very little evidence of bonding among the drivers.

### The solution

Connect2Work/T5 General Manager Ben Curtis gave his full backing to the Train to Gain programme and in October 2006 the first cohort of 27 bus drivers and eight team leaders embarked on their training, delivered by Skills Team Ltd.

Full-time and contract personnel were treated equally and all drivers taking part in the programme started off with a one-day training session. Jean said: “We didn't have any formal in-house training for customer service or team leading, so a Skills Team tutor came in and gave them one-to-one support for the duration of the Train to Gain programme. The learning was very structured, covering all the different aspects of customer service and team leading. They also did online learning from learndirect, to further underpin their knowledge.”

Jean then went a step further by creating a learning room complete with three computers for the drivers, if they wanted to, to use during their breaks.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Visit: [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)  
 or call: 0800 634 0262

### The results

Five of the team leaders and 11 of the customer service candidates took around three months to complete the Train to Gain programme and the rest of the group followed suit a few months later. Good news travels fast: already a further cohort of 14 drivers has embarked on training.

Jean is delighted with the confidence Train to Gain has inspired in her drivers and with the improvement in working practices. She said: "Their professionalism has increased. Previously they were uncomfortable talking to passengers, but now they have the skills to be able to greet them and communicate with ease."

Morale is now at an all-time high, customer complaints relating to poor driver attitude have reduced dramatically and the drivers now work more collaboratively to keep customers happy. For example, after finishing his shift one driver learned that his colleague's bus had broken down. He didn't hesitate to lend a hand: he drove out to the stranded passengers, explained the situation openly to them and then enabled them to complete their journey on his bus. Jean said: "The passengers all thought he was absolutely wonderful! It's great to see such a proactive approach and team spirit emerging."

One of the drivers participating in the programme described Menzies as "the best employer in the industry". Many others said that the benefits of Train to Gain had extended beyond their work into their family lives.

### WHAT DOES TRAIN TO GAIN OFFER EMPLOYERS?

These days, making sure your business is more productive and competitive is a real challenge. Train to Gain can help you get the right skills to do the best job. It's a service that does three things:

- It provides a free and independent look at what skills your business needs – now and in the future. An unbiased skills broker who knows your region and industry works with you to find out what training could make a real difference to your business.
- It helps you pick the right people to do the training. Once you and the skills broker find out what your business needs are, they then work with you to find the right training provider. It's important that the training is done in a way that meets your business's needs.
- It helps you get the most from your training investment. The skills broker can also help find out the best ways to pay for the training, since they know what financial support might be available to you.

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