



LSC Lancashire
ESF Co-Finance
PROJECT EVALUATION

PROJECT TITLE: Floor Covered
PROJECT REF NO: ESF/0203/112
LEAD ORGANISATION: Accrington & Rossendale College
POLICY FIELD AND MEASURE: 4.1
LSC CONTRACT MANAGER: Ann Knight

EVALUATION REPORT DEADLINE
for LSC Lancashire ESF Co-Financing: 30th January 2004

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Overview of the Project Activity and Partners:

The aim of this project was to update and upgrade employees' vocational skills at NVQ Level 2 for those people employed in the Floor-covering craft trade.

Specific objectives were to:

- a) Set up a dedicated workshop to train floorcovering operatives in new products and technologies
- b) Develop an appropriate training programme
- c) Help SMEs by training their operatives, develop a Modern Apprenticeship programme, and train several floorcovering trainer/assessors.

The following organisations supported the project:

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
Contract Flooring Association (CFA)
Flooring Industry Training Association (FITA)
Henkel Thomsit (manufacturer of floor covering products)

Achievements of the Project:

The quantifiable measures identified as being appropriate to gauge the success of the project have exceeded the stated targets:

- 12 companies helped (OP1)
- 15 Modern Apprenticeships
- 38 employees completed and achieved a qualification (OP2)

Summary of project OPs, OCs, and, MSs

- OP1 Number of companies helped
- OP2 Total number of employees helped
- OP3 Number of female employees helped
- OP4 Number of beneficiaries working towards a qualification
- OP5 Number of trainers trained
- OC1 Number of beneficiaries gaining a qualification
- OC2 Net number of jobs safeguarded by ESF support
- MS1 Project Co-ordinator appointed
- MS2 Design and validation of training programme
- MS3 First trainees recruited
- MS4 2nd recruitment drive and awareness raising
- MS5 Final review and evaluation

Areas of Innovation:

On Site Assessment and Training provision in floor-covering at NVQ Level 1 and 2
Modern Apprenticeship programme set up and in operation
College based specialist facilities developed for training in floor-covering skills

Identification of Areas of Good Practices and Areas for Improvement:

Examples of Good Practice:

Recruitment of key project staff according to schedule
Achievement of project objectives
Targeted marketing, awareness raising and recruitment activity
High retention and achievement rates
Flexible and responsive provision

Examples of challenges faced:

Key staff requiring induction into college systems and procedures
Staff requiring induction into project systems and methods
Down time of CITB / City & Guild registration database for several weeks.
New Construction Team support staff
Initial ill-defined LSC Lancashire eligible area of activity
Mobility of workforce and distance travelled to work site often out of area
Change of LSC Lancashire Contract Managers mid project
Long term illness of key project monitoring staff (External Funding Assistant)

Weaknesses as identified by LSC monitoring section in auditing of project systems
Rejection of Paperfree portfolio building system as a legitimate portfolio by external verifier

Lessons Learnt:

Action points to be addressed:

Induction programme for delivery and support staff in project systems to be developed
Faster response required to address gaps left by sick or departed staff in key project roles
Project monitoring and verification systems to be improved cross college to the satisfaction of LSC

Dissemination of Good Practice including Details of Dissemination Materials Produced:

It is intended to disseminate the good practice developed on the project through the supporting organisations.

Details of Publicity Undertaken (attach copies of any advertising / publicity materials produced):

Please refer to Appendix 1: for publicity and awareness raising activity
CFJ (Contract Flooring Journal) the official journal of the Contract Flooring Association, published monthly, and with the largest distribution and readership in the trade.
Intouch, a publication specifically for professionals in the contract carpet fitting business. In their first issue appeared an editorial on the new floor-covering provision.

Case Study:

Please refer to Appendix 1: and the case study presented in the publication.

Views of customers and / or partners:

Customers

The views of customers as related to the Coordinator are on the whole positive.

Partners / Supporters

Individual representatives of the organisations supporting the project have been positive.

Comparison of how the project dealt with Information and Communication Technologies, Equal Opportunities and Sustainability:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

There is no evidence that ICT provision was taken up by beneficiaries although this was open to them. ICT was extensively used by staff to effect all aspects of the project – for example; communication between individuals, the development of learning material both paper based and electronic format, tracking of beneficiary activity and achievement, financial monitoring, writing of project interim and final reports. Staff did experiment with the use ICT to effect on-site recording of beneficiary achievement by use of the Paperfree System by MITAC. This system enables on-site activity to be recorded in digital format and negates the need for evidence to be paper based as is the normal practice in building an NVQ portfolio. On achievement of the NVQ students are given a copy of the electronic portfolio of evidence in CD-ROM format from which a hard copy can be printed if necessary. However, this was not carried forward and fully implemented due to an objection lodged by the External Verifier to the effect that only paper-based evidence would be acceptable.

Equal Opportunities

The project failed to seek out and recruit any women working in this overwhelmingly white male dominated sector to participate in the project.

Sustainability

This project supported the regional approaches to sustainable development by:

i) protecting the environment

The project raised awareness of environmental issues to workers as part of the NVQ delivery. All beneficiaries as part of the training covered health and safety issues that included the proper and safe disposal of waste products.

ii) careful use of natural resources

Wherever possible, resources used in the delivery of training were energy efficient and recyclable. As a result of training workers are now aware of how to maximise resource productivity and to recover and recycle used materials.

iii) progress which recognises the needs of everyone

Since everyone in the community is subject to the effect of pollution, the action undertaken by the project to improve the proper use and disposal of material directly contributes to social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone.

iv) maintaining high and steady levels of economic growth and employment

The project has contributed to the competitiveness of the North West as set out in the North West Regional Competitiveness Strategy and the NWDA Regional Economic Strategy. It is accepted that resource productivity can quadruple the amount of wealth extracted from one unit of natural resources. In developing new skills/skills for growth areas for the installation of flooring systems, the project has helped maintain high and steady levels of economic growth and employment in communities that would otherwise face a loss of traditional jobs.

Details of tools used to evaluate the impact of the project:

There is no evidence of any specialist tools having been developed or used to achieve this.

Additional Information:

Provision is assured to continue for the foreseeable future. Two full time Lecturer / Assessor's are now employed on the programme which is fully subscribed with a small waiting list. The project has been a complete success.

Appendix 1: Publicity material

Declaration:

Signature:

Position:

Date: