

Ryvita Poole

Bournemouth and Poole College is renowned for saving businesses time and money with its innovative training initiatives, but its latest achievement for the local Ryvita factory really takes the biscuit.

In a slimming effort worthy of Ryvita itself, the college made a simple suggestion that's saving the Poole factory thousands of pounds a year – and that's as a result of training that isn't costing the firm a penny.

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“We have a flavour-change process every day and a half,” says Ryvita’s training manager, Bobby Gray. “The college people looked at the way the operators were doing it and suggested massive efficiencies. They pointed out that if we moved some equipment to different areas it would save four and a half minutes on one particular process. Over a year, that’s worth six to seven thousand pounds to us.”

The training involved a Level 2 NVQ in Business Improvement Techniques for production staff that was customised to suit Ryvita.

“They focussed on the systems we already had in place,” says Bobby. “So instead of using off-the-shelf risk assessments, they used ours. It was much more relevant. I’ve never seen anyone as flexible as our trainer. Sometimes production issues would get in the way and we needed to cancel and rearrange. He even came in to us the other weekend!

“The training has allowed the staff to develop new skills and empowered them to take responsibility for their own working area – and the bonus was it was all free. The time invested was well paid back in motivation alone, and it’s created a learning snowball. Lots of people want to get involved now. It’s sown the seeds of a learning culture.”

He says many of those who have taken courses want to go on to learn something else, with a number of deputy team leaders ready for roles that will become available shortly. One worker was promoted from supervisor to manager as a result of his qualification and is looking into training members of his new team.

“The college team have been very professional and responsive and I have recommended them to another food manufacturing company,” adds Bobby.

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