

Middleton Engineering, Somerset

At Middleton Engineering, a Somerset-based recycling equipment manufacturer launched in 1975, the five-strong management team is preparing to replace its founders at the helm when they retire.

That means developing new areas of expertise – and in the case of technical director Mark Smith, taking a six-month course in leadership.

Mr Smith, who joined the company in 1992, will start the course with Exeter University in January. It will involve distance learning and one day a month attending the university.

If it is considered a success, the firm's four other managers will take the course at a later stage.

"I've never done anything like this before," said Mr Smith. "We are looking ahead and planning for when we take over. We know there are gaps in our knowledge, so it's great that we are able to get support for management training."

Glastonbury-based Middleton, which employs around 45 staff, has teamed up with Train to Gain in the past to boost the skills of its engineers. It has also used the services of the South West Manufacturing Advisory Service.

"We went to Train to Gain to ask about management training, having benefitted from their engineer training. We're pleased they could help us out."

Train to Gain is paying just over half of the £1,975 cost of the course, which was arranged through its Leadership and Management Advisory Service.

Middleton Engineering was originally launched to supply equipment to the peat industry on the



nearby Somerset Levels, later moving into recycling equipment. Today it manufactures, refurbishes, services, installs and maintains recycling balers, conveyors and shredders for waste recyclers. Customers include major logistics companies for retailers who have to deal with large amounts of cardboard and other packaging.

It also supplies equipment to recycling and waste disposal firms across the UK such as Biffa and Severnside.

Train to Gain Leadership and Management Adviser Sarah Hicks said: *"The managers at Middleton Engineering have realised they need to upgrade their skills as the business's founders take a back seat."*

"I'm glad we have been able to help with funding in this way and look forward to seeing the leadership training successfully put in to practice."