

## TS Tech UK Swindon

The four-month shutdown of Honda's UK car production due to the worldwide recession could have been a massive blow to the company that makes its seats – but Swindon College has helped its workers discover a silver lining that none of them expected.

Like Honda itself, TS Tech UK was an innocent victim of the global economic downturn, but instead of sitting back and bemoaning their fate, the staff have thrown themselves with enthusiasm into a training programme devised by the college and the firm's Business Improvement Manager, Dave McGarrell.

More than 400 employees have taken courses in lean manufacturing, computer software and literacy, project management, Japanese etiquette and language, business improvement techniques, people management, and presentation skills.

"It's definitely a positive for the company as it's the first time we've had a chance to benchmark our people's abilities," says Dave. "We saw it as an opportunity to assess where our people were and how to move them forward. Every company needs to know how to develop its people – but if you don't understand their limitations, you might put them on courses they might not understand.

"We're showing our people we want to invest in them. And we're helping some of them improve their English and literacy so they can understand the documents we give to them."

Dave says the lean management Foundation course is being taken by everyone from the management to the shop floor so they all understand where the business is and what it's doing.

"It isn't just about building seats for the CRV, Civic and Jazz, but about building an overall work improvement programme that everyone understands," he says. "I'm hoping it inspires people in this company to learn more and better themselves, perhaps by going into a different area of our work.

"We're beginning to see an uplift where people are seeing the bright side of it all. We've just gone through redundancies, and people are seeing this training as a positive. We're bringing them with us. The most exciting bit for me is watching people wanting to do more. The feedback we're getting is very positive.

"This isn't just for pure company benefit. We want to give people a chance to benefit themselves, because there's nothing worse than standing on the shop floor with things happening around you when you haven't a clue why it's happening. This course gives people that insight."

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"Training for the 458 people in the workforce at TS Tech was carried out both at the company's site and at the college. The college have produced flexible training solutions enabling our associates to upskill with times, venues and modes of delivery to suit the company's needs – and they have sourced many different funding streams to enable this training to be offered to TS Tech at minimal or zero cost.

"If you have a goal you want to get to and a standard you want to reach, this is definitely the way to do it."



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