

CASE STUDY

AQUAFABS



In 2008, Aquafabs Managing Director David Steele and his eight-strong team all undertook a NVQ Level 2 qualification in Business Improvement Techniques (B-IT), developed by the Skills Academy, part of Semta – the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

After completing the training, which was delivered by Northampton College - a Skills Academy approved provider - and partially funded under the LSC Train to Gain scheme, David has seen the company's turnover double to around £500,000, despite the global recession.

This has been achieved through improvements in a number of areas, including a reduction in lead times and better utilisation of equipment. The training has also helped to improve morale amongst the workforce and helped to ensure they are all pulling in the same direction.

In 2008 the maritime industry was facing an uncertain future, and the luxury yacht building business was particularly badly hit by the economic downturn. David knew that to survive he would have to invest in developing his own skills and the skills of his workforce. He also realised that he needed to introduce systems that would make best use of the equipment at the Aquafabs site.

"I had heard of the Skills Academy through its association with world-class manufacturers such as Rolls-Royce and Toyota and when I heard that Northampton College was working with the organisation I was keen to get involved," he said.

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Managing Director

Skills the secret to Aquafabs' success

A Northamptonshire-based company that specialises in supplying components for luxury yacht builders and the maritime industry has doubled its profits over the past couple of years and has expanded into new premises after working with the National Skills Academy for Manufacturing (the Skills Academy).

semta

The Sector Skills Council
for Science, Engineering and
Manufacturing Technologies

Aquafabs Limited

David went on to say that the training has enabled employees to make suggestions on how to improve the company's production processes to make them more efficient, and more profitable.

Added David: "Thanks to the systems we have introduced as part of the B-IT programme we have not only survived, but expanded into purpose-built premises a short distance from our original home in the village of Old."

Following this success, in 2010 David and several key members of his team are planning to progress to Level 3 of the B-IT NVQ in an effort to drive further expansion and ensure Aquafabs develops into a market leader in the fabrication of bespoke marine components.



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