

CASE STUDY

LAND ROVER



partners, suppliers and, most critically, employees, to achieve world-class standards of performance within five years. During the past three years, Land Rover has worked to create an environment where people thrive and engage in the transformation. Land Rover treats all staff as members of the team and helps them develop their skills to the benefit of themselves, their teams and the business as a whole.

Part of this process was Land Rover's decision to offer production line employees the opportunity to learn more about B-IT and how they can be applied to the workplace. It wanted to encourage individuals to move away from routine working practices, understand how they could play a role in the overall efficiency of the business and apply their knowledge to making Land Rover an even better organisation.

From the many avenues available Land Rover chose to offer employees the National Vocational Qualification in Business Improvement Techniques (NVQ B-IT). A key factor in this decision was the impact of ongoing efforts between the Skills Academy, Learning Skills Council and Warwickshire College. Together they had shifted the NVQ's emphasis from classroom theory to onsite learning and assessment, by introducing an industrial placement programme as part of the NVQ Level 2. This made it more accessible, more relevant and reduced the amount of time Land Rover candidates would need to spend offsite.

The response to offering workers this opportunity has been phenomenal. The impact can be seen both in the changes that are happening on the production line and in the way people approach their work.

"You can give people the tools to do a job but until they understand how their part impacts everything else, you will struggle to make sustained improvements."

Lloyd Neal
Training Team
Leader, Land Rover

By working with The National Skills Academy (the Skills Academy) and Warwickshire College, Land Rover has been able to offer its employees a more accessible way to achieve industry recognised qualifications in Business Improvement Techniques (B-IT). The result is an empowered, motivated and skilled workforce that wants to develop itself into the most effective and efficient manufacturing team.

Land Rover as a company is committed to development. Its dedication to ongoing business improvement and the creation of the world's best workforce was framed by a challenge from Ford to review the way it worked with customers,

Gary Dutton, team leader on the Customer Acceptance Line found that the NVQ allowed him to spot new ways to adapt routine activities and improve them, enhancing overall vehicle quality. "You take your knowledge for granted, but the NVQ shows that it can be applied throughout the production line to areas and activities you never imagined could be easily improved." One particular example for Dutton was testing electric windows as vehicles came off the production line. There was an issue about wind noise from electric windows which had not been resolved during in-house testing.

Following his work on the NVQ, Dutton was able to take a step back and review the entire test process. He noticed that window tests were done in a particularly noisy part of the factory and suggested they be moved to a quiet space so more subtle noises could easily be picked up. Since suggesting and implementing the change, the issue is rarely encountered anymore. "The NVQ taught me how to review parts of our process in a way which lends itself to identifying and solving problems. It took four weeks to complete the course but I did all the learning on site. This means that as you learn the theory of B-IT you are able to immediately start putting it into practice in your own working environment."

Land Rover has been impressed with the way its staff have taken to the NVQ. "We didn't force anyone to qualify – that isn't the way we work," says Training Consultant Andrea Rathbone. "We prefer employees to make their own decisions and want to improve themselves. Once one or two people qualified, others saw the benefit and quickly followed. It's been so successful we've been overrun by requests to take the next level of the NVQ. It's also driven more people to go for promotions and jobs in new areas. The entire production line just seems more driven."

Working with Warwickshire College and the Skills Academy to deliver the NVQ has also, in part, been responsible for the emergence of a more consultative approach to the production line at Land Rover. This has emerged through a process the company refers to as 'inverting the triangle'. In a traditional organisation ideas flow from a small number of senior people at the top and filter through to the workforce which represents a larger group of employees. At Land Rover the ideas now flow both ways. The larger group of production line workers are as much responsible for changes which promote greater efficiency as senior managers as they now have the confidence to propose them. This not only empowers the workforce and drives it to improve itself but increases the number of places from which great ideas can stem, naturally increasing Land Rover's continuous opportunities to become a better company.



"The ability to take the training out of the classroom and into the workplace made our decision easy. Without this new workplace element it would have been hard to encourage people to attend. They don't like leaving the plant and we obviously prefer them to be learning onsite. The National Skills Academy for Manufacturing and Warwickshire College are enablers – making it work for all parties. They are the glue which holds the system together."

Lloyd Neal
Training Team Leader, Land Rover