

CASE STUDY

STANNAH LIFTS



A family-owned firm with a history dating back to the 1860s, the entire Stannah Group employs 1,600 people with 180 of them based at the Stannah Lifts manufacturing centre at Anton Mill, Andover.

In 2008, 10 members of the Stannah Lifts team took part in a pilot programme developed by the Skills Academy and delivered by VT Training, which has itself undergone an intensive upskilling programme to become an approved Skills Academy training provider. As a result, the company has already seen a number of improvements on the shop floor. Graeme Tonks, Manufacturing Manager at Stannah Lifts explains: "We already look set to break our target of reducing work hours per unit by 10 per cent thanks to the training which has equipped staff with the skills they need to identify improvements on the shop floor."

Meanwhile, as part of his NVQ, one member of staff has helped to increase sales of spares by 16 per cent. Spares Co-ordinator, Nick Powell, completely re-designed the company's spares catalogue, making it easier to use. As a result, he has halved the number of incoming calls from agents and engineers requesting clarification on the availability or suitability of individual parts.

Nick comments: "The B-IT NVQ has given me a much better understanding of the needs of the business, as well as the confidence to come forward with ideas to improve performance."

"I worked on the new parts catalogue for over nine months as a project for the qualification but I'm now developing an e-shop so that parts can easily be ordered over the internet."

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Nick Powell
Spares Co-ordinator

Investment in training pays off for Stannah

As a leading brand renowned for the manufacture of lifts and stairlifts, The Stannah Group has always considered its workforce as one of its most valuable assets. With the help of the National Skills Academy for Manufacturing (the Skills Academy), one part of the group is seeing remarkable returns on its investment in skills training.

Based in Andover, Hampshire, Stannah Lifts Limited was amongst the first companies in the UK to obtain Investors in People status. In recent years Stannah has taken staff development to the next level thanks to unique NVQ programmes in Business Improvement Techniques (B-IT), developed by the Skills Academy to meet the company's specific needs.

The pilot NVQ Level 2 in B-IT was developed by utilising the Skills Academy's Learning Engine approach that ensures all training is linked to business objectives and that skills learnt are put into practice in the workplace. Rather than searching for arbitrary improvements that tick boxes for the qualification, this revolutionary approach ensures all improvements are focussed on real business priorities, unlike other B-IT programmes in the marketplace.

At Stannah, it has proved so successful that a second cohort is now embarking on the programme whilst those that have completed the course – which includes four, one day workshops – is embarking on a Level 3 qualification.

According to the Stannah Lifts Operations Director, Kim Saville, the B-IT programme also fits well with the company's ethos of staff development.

"Continuous improvement runs through the veins of the company and at any one time up to 40 per cent of staff are engaged with some form of training activity," Kim explains.

"However we felt that we had reached something of a ceiling with continuous improvement and we needed new tools to take this to a new level.

"We also wanted to find a qualification that would equip employees with new skills, rather than just recognising the ones they already had. It also needed to fit in with our company business objectives.

"The B-IT NVQ exactly meets our needs. It was almost too good to be true. The Skills Academy and Keith Jones from VT Training have worked hard to match both the content and delivery to our own, individual needs. The end result is a training programme tailored to meet our business objectives."

Alastair Stannah, Managing Director of Stannah Lifts Ltd, is equally delighted with the Skills Academy and VT Training for their efforts in ensuring that the training provided was bespoke, rather than an 'off-the-shelf' product.

Alastair comments: "The Skills Academy has responded positively to our feedback during the pilot and overall I'm sure that the resulting programme has helped us to survive the current economic slowdown. The project has been a very positive experience for everyone involved."

Bill Twigg, Development Director for the Skills Academy, says their achievements reflect the importance of matching training to clearly identified business needs.

"We are delighted to be working with such a forward-thinking company that has taken a long-term view when it comes to staff development; as opposed to cutting costs short-term and losing their skill base."



Stannah Factfile

- Stannah was founded in the 1860s by Joseph Stannah and remains a family owned and managed business.
- In 1999 the Stannah Stairlifts division of the Group received its third Queen's Award for Export and in 2003 it received awards from the Business Innovation Skills (BIS) for being the best manufacturing and engineering factory in the UK.
- The Stannah Group consists of Stannah Lifts Limited, Stannah Stair Lifts Limited, Stannah Microlifts Limited and Stannah Lift Services Limited.