

CASE STUDY

THALES GROUP PLC



John is approached by numerous training agencies about what their latest products can bring to the organisation. He is naturally cynical when confronted by unsolicited spam mail but noticed a flyer on B-IT following a conversation with David Hatton, CEO of the Engineering Technology Council in Northern Ireland. John discussed this with his team and decided to use it as a development tool, trying out the training with nine employees.

This is where the National Skills Academy for Manufacturing (the Skills Academy) got involved. The Skills Academy was set up as part of Engineering Training Council Northern Ireland. It works with employers for employers to identify the right training for their business needs enabling economic benefit through powerful work-based learning within the UK manufacturing sector. It maximises return and ensures the business benefits are sustained long after the training has been completed by using the Skills Academy's Learning Engine approach, a five step process to identify the right product delivered by the right provider with the right process. It also helps training providers by validating them against industry-recognised levels of competence, providing a beacon of security for businesses.

As part of this the Skills Academy introduced John to Phil Harrison of Harrison Associates, who took the nine Thales employees through the work-based B-IT NVQ Level 2 over eight weeks.

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Bill Twigg
Development
Director of the
Skills Academy

Thales employees in Belfast have become the first workers in Northern Ireland to complete the National Vocational Qualification in Business Improvement Techniques (NVQ for B-IT). This is thanks to a training plan developed by John Leighton, Thales' Head of Production in Northern Ireland, and the input of the National Skills Academy for Manufacturing.

“The results were really positive,” said John. “We were impressed enough to then roll out the training to our Crossgar site where 24 employees successfully completed B-IT NVQ Level 2, from managers to kitchen staff. The effects saw improvements in cost benefits, but just as importantly for a business that works in the defence sector we saw more successful audits of the site. Now we have approximately 90 staff doing the NVQ across levels 2 and 3.”

Bill Twigg, Development Director of the Skills Academy sees this as the first step in filling the engineering skills gap in Northern Ireland. He said, “Thales employees have now become the first in Northern Ireland to successfully complete the B-IT NVQ, an industry-recognised qualification. We see this as a first step that will gather momentum as we show manufacturing employees throughout the region the business benefits that quality skills training provide.”

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