

SECTOR FOCUS-TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

TRAIN TO GAIN

Train to Gain is a new service run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the organisation responsible for delivering the Government's skills strategy in England. The Train to Gain service offers impartial advice, matches training needs with training providers and makes sure that training and support is delivered to meet your objectives.

Research suggests that 1.3 million people go to work every day without the skills to do the job proficiently. These skills gaps are estimated to cost businesses £10 billion in lost revenue per year – that's equivalent to £165,000 for a typical business with 50 employees. Research also shows that effective training can help your business:

- Increase productivity
- Improve customer service skills
- Generate greater staff satisfaction and motivation
- Retain its staff

Train to Gain is a free service, provided through a network of specialist skills brokers, who will assess your training needs as well as offering impartial and independent advice on a wide range of training and business development needs. The Train to Gain specialist skills brokerage is provided by East Midlands Business Ltd, who are contracted by the LSC in the East Midlands.

Once the skills broker has completed their assessment with you, they will put together a proposal to help you find and fund the right skills training for your business. Once you've decided what training you need and who you would like to supply it, the broker will introduce you to your chosen training provider and allow the negotiations to proceed to enable a relationship to grow.

Train to Gain approved training providers are quality assured to ensure that you and your business receive training, focussed on the needs of your business, which includes being flexible about style and content as well as time and place that training occurs. They will work with you to design a tailored training package for your business.

Train to Gain is backed nationally by more than £200 million in its first year and you may be eligible for funding for the following:

- Free training for employees to gain their first full Level 2 qualification
- Training for staff with low basic skills such as numeracy and literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Wage contribution for companies with less than 50 employees
- £1,000 grant for small businesses for leadership and management training
- Support for Apprenticeships, Foundation Degrees and Investors in People
- Support for Level 3 qualifications and beyond for regional priority sectors – Construction, Engineering, Health/Social Care, Retail, Logistics and Distribution, Tourism, Culture, Leisure/Hospitality and Manufacture of Food and Drink

To find out more about Train to Gain and how you can access the service please call 0845 057 1817 or log on to www.traintogain.gov.uk

MARKET DRIVEN SOLUTIONS LIMITED

Train to Gain puts Skills Brokers closer to businesses than ever before. In the Employer Training Pilots (ETPs), 51 per cent of businesses surveyed in the ETPs' first year evaluation report (Institute for Employment Studies, 2003) thought the help they received to link training with business needs was the most attractive element.

Market Driven Solutions (MDS), originally formed to help Asian businesses with IT, has been brokering and delivering training through the Leicestershire ETP. MDS has trained 940 employees at 46 Leicestershire companies in the past two years. They put their success down to providing brokerage skills support and tailored training.

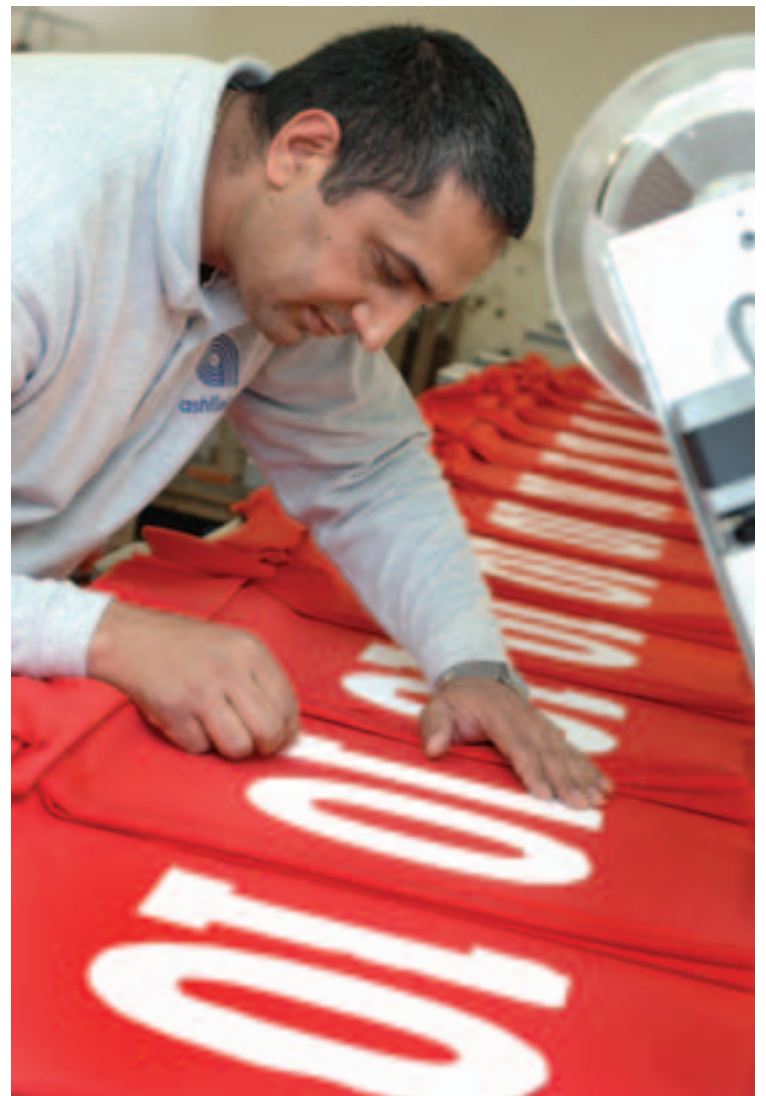
Sarbjit Johal, Business Development Executive with MDS, says: "We work to engage employers who would not normally train their employees. We actively seek to

overcome barriers to training and education, be it time, family commitments, financial restraints, language barriers or lack of formal education."

Ashfield (UK) Limited is a privately owned company based in Leicestershire. It established itself as a contract embroidery service to clothing manufacturers. In 2001 Ashfield decided to diversify by using its production facility to produce its own sourced embroidered and printed corporate casual wear and work wear. It currently employs 30 people. NVQ Level 2 qualifications in Performing Manufacturing Operations have been awarded to 16 embroidery machine operators and garment packers.

Simon Widdowson, Sales Director at Ashfield, says: "As an organisation linked to the textile manufacturing industry, we realised the need for change and necessity to learn new skills several years ago. In MDS, we have found a partner who understands the difficulties small businesses face if they don't implement new skills, staff training and better business practices."

Sam Bhula, Production Manager, says: "The staff are happy, motivated and encouraged by the changes Ashfield has made to drive the business forward. It is reassuring to be part of an organisation that is committed to the welfare of its employees, especially in the textile manufacturing industry which has been suffering in recent years due to the huge impact of imported manufactured goods from the Far East."



Jujhar Singh working at Ashfield UK Ltd.