



SKILLS SUPPORT FOR THE WORKFORCE

Increased skillset has led to increased confidence at every level for civil engineering and groundwork specialists in Wolverhampton

The Challenge

Hannon Brothers are a leading civil engineering and groundwork specialists based in Wolverhampton. The company was established in 1998 and since then has extended its activities to cover a radius of more than 150 miles.

The construction sector is a very competitive market so a highly skilled and adaptable workforce is essential to ensure success. However, finding training tailored to meet the company's specific needs can be a challenge.

The Solution

The Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) project offers fully funded training designed to help small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) fill skill gaps, raise productivity and boost business growth. In fact, up to £10 million is now available for SMEs in the Black Country for training.

It is co-financed through the European Union's European Social Fund and Skills Funding Agency and is available for SMEs seeking non-compulsory work-based training to support their business growth plan.

Research has found that employees that undertake non-compulsory work-related training do their jobs better and are more satisfied with their work but a lack of time and possible costs can act as barriers to accessing training. The Skills Support for the Workforce project is designed to address these challenges.

Fully Funded Training

Craig Clark, Construction Manager at Hannon Brothers, said the company has always been interested in upskilling its workforce and recognised the wider benefits to employees and the company as a whole. He said: "We decided to participate in the programme as the construction sector is very competitive and we wanted to ensure we had a highly skilled, adaptable workforce which would increase both productivity and efficiency and allow us to bid for more work and tenders within the region."

He has been impressed by the training offered through SSW and delivered by Rhino Training Ltd. “The initial stages of the process included the completion of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which was done in conjunction with the company’s Business and Training Plan,” explained Craig. “This was found to be beneficial as it tailored the programme to suit our needs both currently and also in line with our future growth plans.

“On completion of the training we will have a much more rounded, flexible workforce. For example, during the TNA a need for more skilled plant operatives was identified therefore on completion productivity in this area should increase greatly. It will also improve confidence within the team and where opportunities arise for increased responsibility we should now be able to cover this internally,” Craig continued.

“The long term effects of this training will be an increased skillset within the team allowing us to bid for more work, which in turn will help us to reach our growth ambitions.”

“We would recommend this training to other businesses as it’s a fully funded service which works in line with the needs of both ourselves as an employer and our employees and will benefit the business as a whole going forward,” added Craig.

Ebrahim Dockrat, Director of Calderdale College, prime contractor for the project highlighted the SSW benefits: “We offer a range of flexible, bespoke training plans designed to help your business grow. By training your staff you can improve your ability to adapt to a rapidly changing business environment, nurture a leadership team for the future and make you an employer of choice for emerging talent.

“As this training is funded with European money this is the last project of its kind,” added Mr Dockrat. “This funding is only available until July 2018 and so it’s a case of get it whilst you still can.”

For more information on the Skills Support for the Workforce project and to see if your business is eligible for fully funded training please visit <http://ssw.fundingunit.org.uk/>

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