



SKILLS SUPPORT FOR THE WORKFORCE

Training has led to improved customer service and increased business for a sportswear company in Halesowen

The Challenge

Established 25 years ago SRS Leisure sells swim wear and accessories. The company supplies leisure centres, swimming clubs, holiday parks, hotels and individuals through mail order.

Great customer service can bring recommendations and repeat custom and so staff members who are trained to deal with customers in a positive way are essential to maintaining customer satisfaction and building a successful company. However, finding training tailored to meet a 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

Maria Williams, Customer Service Advisor at SRS Leisure, has taken the customer care course offered through SSW and delivered by ESS (Essential Site Skills). Maria commented: "I wanted to gain experience and learn new skills which would assist me in my every day working life.

"I have learnt new ways to calm customers once they are upset. By putting the customer at ease and not retaliating in my tone of voice, it's possible to achieve a situation in which the

customer is happy and more likely to pass on favourable comments to others and return for further business themselves,” Maria added.

Maria was impressed by the training too. “I cannot fault the trainer or the programme. The advisor was very relaxed. Everything was explained in great detail and modules were revisited in order for us to fully understand them before moving onto the next. If new training was deemed appropriate and beneficial I would be happy to undertake additional training. Everyone is capable of learning more within business.”

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://sww.fundingunit.org.uk/>

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