



Cultural Change Case Study – Training Plus (Merseyside) Ltd

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Company details:

Training Plus Merseyside (Tpm) is a private sector, vibrant and progressive work based learning provider that has been established since 2001. Our main aim is to provide companies with high quality business training solutions. Our areas of vocational specialism are business administration, childcare and hairdressing.

We work with approximately 200 Merseyside companies helping them to increase efficiency, staff retention and profitability through our business solutions packages. We offer training needs analysis, recruitment information, advice and guidance in addition to a wide range of qualifications. Our portfolio of government funded and privately financed training includes Apprenticeships, NVQs, Train to Gain, The Diploma and our flexible modular programme “Great Futures”. Our clients range from small private sector companies to large corporations and public bodies. We also offer specific services to schools.

Awards / standards

Currently Tpm is:

- an approved centre for City and Guilds and Education Development International (EDI)
- a recognised Investor in people (IiP) organisation
- a “Two Tick” Positive About Disabled People employer
- a Matrix Standard organisation.

Recently the company registered its application to achieve the Training Quality Standard.

Workforce profile

Tpm has 43 highly qualified and vocationally experienced professionals. There are 36 Full-Time and 7 Part-Time employees. 11 (25%) staff have a disability or specific/learning difficulty. 9 staff members (21%) are male. 3 staff (7%) describe their racial origin as other than White British. 5 staff are currently enrolled Apprentices, Advanced Apprentices or NVQ (Train to Gain) candidates.

The Company fosters a grow-your-own culture and has been very successful in doing so. The Company’s Personnel Officer was originally a School-leaving Apprentice in Business Administration and progressed to Advanced Apprenticeship in BA; certificate in Personnel Practice, NVQ L4 Management and is currently studying a L7 CIPD Course, with LJMU.

Accessibility and “reasonable adjustment

Our buildings are physically accessible to all clients. We have worked through access enhancements and improvements following a professional access audit conducted in 2005.

Both buildings have lift access to all floors. All public and most staff areas are wheelchair accessible. Technology is utilised in many ways to assist and reduce barriers to learning and work for clients and staff alike. These are all clearly documented in our Disability Statement.

Several staff members have been given full access to work assessment to assess and subsequently meet their specific and individual needs. One employee is partially sighted and uses a range of hardware and software based technological support to undertake his invaluable role as Business Development Co-ordinator.

Trainee profile and provision

Our premises include seven fully accessible state of the art training suites. We offer special support to learners with disabilities and learning difficulties and additional help with literacy, numeracy and communications. Our information and brochures are available in alternative formats.

Equality and diversity principles are intrinsic to our vision and operations. All our students complete our value-added equality and diversity certificated training. This makes sure that learners are aware of current legislation and are able to identify discrimination, racism and prejudice and stereotyping, developing positive approaches to disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age and gender.

The following policies are in place:

- Equality and Diversity
- Dignity and Respect and Bullying and Harassment
- Zero Tolerance
- Health and Safety
- Flexible Working

Tpm has arrangements for all of the above. Not necessarily in distinct and separate policies but all of them are implicitly covered within our Equality & Diversity Policy, Disability Statement, Staff Recruitment & Training Policy

Our **Equality and Diversity Policy** covers the entire range of equality and diversity legislation. In broad terms it addresses the 6 key strands of equality and diversity, namely, race, disability, gender and identity, religion and belief, age and sexual orientation.

As a small business we apply a discretionary sick pay rate of equal benefit to all staff above the statutory minimum. However in extreme and difficult circumstances e.g. lone parenthood; bereavement; no extended familial support structure, the Board of Directors will act accordingly and compassionately. In addition to statutory benefits all staff are extended a small compassionate leave when a “family of choice” member dies.

Training and development in equality, diversity and human rights

Staff are engaged on the subject of EDHR from the outset with the company at induction and then through their own compulsory training programme. This programme now includes achievement of a Level 2 Award in Equality & Diversity certificated by EDI, within their first six months and this is then refreshed every three years.

Each year staff receive certificated CPD courses or sessions on a particular strand of equality and diversity and this ranges from a host of different training and awareness sessions. These have included race equality development; welcoming disabled customers; respect for people – valuing diversity; ASD training and awareness; dyslexia awareness.

We facilitate and deliver a “train the trainer” course which is a level 2 Equality and Diversity award developed with EDI in collaboration with Tpm. Five of our students were amongst the first in the country to achieve the Equality and Diversity Level 2 award with EDI as part of their Apprenticeship Framework with TPM.

The culture of the organisation is built on the following six promises:

- To provide effective and relevant quality training for learners and employers
- To respect and support our learners as individuals and ensure their safety
- To operate a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination
- To respond quickly to the needs of our clients
- To continue to strive for excellence in all we do
- To continue providing the best employment opportunities for learners.

Brian Quinn a Director of the company states:

“A commitment and drive from the ownership of an organisation is imperative to achieve and sustain equality and diversity within an organisation. This is because once you have stated your intent for the people within the organisation and what you expect to deliver to the client groups; you will be required to follow your words with strategy, action, compassion, empowerment determination and yes sometimes money.

There are two fundamental personal passions that drive my work at Training Plus Merseyside - helping people achieve their potential in life, whatever they consider that to be, and ensuring equality of opportunity for all, both in terms of the organisation’s systems and its philosophy.

So much commitment, inspiration and pure hard work have gone into creating our company. Together, we’ve developed solid working practices which provide firm foundations for our quality training services. Robust recruitment procedures mean we have a diverse team of staff working in an environment where difference and similarity are equally celebrated. And of course we’re committed to staff training and development in a context of regular effective appraisals. All these factors have led to excellently qualified and loyal staff which in turn benefits our clients.

Each day, I find reason to be proud of Training Plus Merseyside, not least of the amazing achievements of our individual learners who in many cases have overcome great personal difficulty. They are our inspiration and also our reward as they show us that Training Plus Merseyside really is a place where great futures begin”.

The people who have achieved at Tpm, despite the odds that were stacked against them whether that be their own self-limiting beliefs or the barriers and labels imposed upon them

by society and others, have done so because we gave them no option but to believe in themselves and their ability”.

Steven is working in a non-traditional occupational area, childcare. Steven has been encouraged and supported by the company to reach for his career aspirations and further encouraged his established academic achievements to date.

“What I most value about Training Plus Merseyside is working with a team of people that support each other. Problems are readily shared and everyone’s opinion matters. I thought that my dyslexia might be a problem when I applied for the job but it wasn’t - the support and understanding from everyone is amazing”.

Training Plus Merseyside has longed championed dyslexia. The company has developed rigorous and professional screening methods and gained the trust of the many clients it supports. Several staff hold BTEC L3 Awards in Dyslexia Recognition and Analysis. Tpm is seen as an exemplar in WBL for Dyslexia and the following two case studies perhaps indicate why:

Michael, a previous hairdressing student was someone who trusted the Company’s philosophy and took us at our word; here’s what he had to say about us...

“I am working at my Level Two in hairdressing with Training Plus Merseyside. I was worried that my dyslexia would be a barrier but the education and training I have received has shown me that there are no barriers in life”.

Danielle, a previous childcare learner also benefitted from our support:

“In training sessions, staff prepare materials on blue paper which helps me read text easier; this is really helpful. The other really important thing is the additional visits I get from my assessor Lisa: having these tutorials every two weeks makes sure that I stay ahead with my learning, breaks work into manageable tasks and means that I have help should I need it. This is very important to me because someday I want to own my own nursery”.

Future plans

An area that Tpm has worked avidly on in the last year is increasing our knowledge and awareness on Autism Spectrum Disorder. We have benefitted from effective and purposeful training as an organisation from “Autism Initiatives” in Sefton. What we hope to do as we move forward is be able to support the transition of young people with ASD into our organisation whether that be onto traditional or bespoke vocational training or in meaningful work placements here in our offices. We hope that we can continue to work on transition methods and strategies with Autism Initiatives to achieve this.

Please visit our website for more details about any of the information featured above and additional examples of satisfied clients.

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