

SUCCESS FOR TRAIN TO GAIN IN BRISTOL

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A recent advertising push from Train to Gain has grabbed the attention of many businesses in the region.

Thousands of employees across the West have been referred to learning through the Train to Gain service, which is funded by the Learning and Skills Council and delivered across the region by Business Link. Train to Gain offers impartial advice to businesses about how they can effectively train their staff to provide them with the right skills for the job.

Bristol-based SOFA project is one of the 10,000 businesses in the South West that used Train to Gain to strengthen the skills of their workforce. The charity supplies re-used furniture, household goods and domestic appliances to the Bristol area. Although the company started as 'man with a van', it now has 23 staff operating out of two warehouses, a workshop and eight lorries and vans to make deliveries.

Seven staff improved their skills and gained NVQ Level 2 qualifications in Distribution, Warehousing and Storage Operations, Team Leadership, Customer Service and Driving Goods Vehicles.

Vicki said, "The training has had an impact on the way the employees approach their work, making the working processes at SOFA more effective and more strategic. SOFA

will no doubt continue to benefit from this investment and we were delighted to support such a worthy company.”

Julian Williams, Director of SOFA Project, said: “We are a social enterprise who are keen to develop our staff but lack the cash resources to pay for training programmes. I was aware of the NVQ programme but it has never been affordable. When this opportunity arose for funded training it was a great chance to give something back to the men and women who work so hard for SOFA, day in, day out.”

Chris Minett, Skills Development Director, Train to Gain said: “The advertising has certainly helped to generate more awareness of the service, but there are still hundreds of businesses in the West of England who could benefit from Train to Gain. The service really does make a difference to an organisation’s profitability by motivating staff, raising the skill levels of the workforce and helping it to gain a competitive edge in an increasing competitive market.”

Train to Gain Skills Brokers offer businesses impartial advice on their skills requirements; match the training needs of companies with training providers and help to create tailored development packages.

More information on Train to Gain can be found via - www.traintogain.gov.uk.

Note to Editors:

- Train to Gain is a new service from the LSC to help businesses easily access information, advice and support on training, through experienced and independent brokers.
- Train to Gain began in April 2006 in Devon and Cornwall and Wiltshire and was rolled out across England from August 1st 2006.
- The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the

best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

- Business Link provides a free information and enquiry service via an information gateway on the web www.businesslink.gov.uk and via the telephone on 0845 600 9006 to all businesses and those considering starting a business. Additionally It provides impartial business advice and support through a network of partner organisations, which it co-ordinates, and a register of independent business practitioners. The national Business Link service is delivered under contract from the South West RDA.

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