



National Training Awards  
2008

## Academy secures High-Tech future

A Dunstable engineering company is securing its future by recruiting local school-leavers and teaching them in its own training academy.

High-Tech Engineering, of Houghton Regis, which was established in 1985 and uses advanced technology to produce quality precision components, has now been short-listed for a National Training Award.

Training Instructor John Chopping said: “We use leading-edge technology to produce quality precision-engineered components, often in exotic materials, for customers in the aviation, aerospace, defence, scientific, electronics and motor industries.

“We work round the clock on a wide range of complex engineering tasks with detailed assembly work and test fixtures, and we recently completed a contract to manufacture and assemble a firing mechanism on a fighting vehicle for an aerospace defence customer.

“Our training academy has a regular intake of new engineering trainees, ensuring that the company has a continuous flow of multi-skilled, well-trained engineering staff.”

He added that the key to success criterion was having a skilled workforce to drive and harness computer-controlled machines and complex software.

Before the establishment of the academy, hiring skilled engineers was the normal way of increasing productivity, but not only was there a severe local shortage of skilled CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) machinists, but trying to hire individuals who were competent in the range of machines the company used was almost impossible.

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Rather than having to retrain skilled individuals in the appropriate technology, High-Tech Engineering decided it would be more beneficial for the company, and for the local community, to hire six apprentices per year from local schools and train them to the standards it required. This training allowed the company to plan for further expansion with a steady flow of multi-skilled staff and has been a major factor in its success.

“The Training Academy has been the best solution for a very difficult problem,” said John Chopping. “Training covers a wide range of technical skills, including Health & Safety, CNC Machining, CNC programming, CAD/CAM software and Computer Measuring Machine Inspection equipment. “It is playing a fundamental part in the future success of the company. The benefits to productivity and growth are both measurable and beyond dispute.” High-Tech Engineering Managing Director Steve Tickner added: “The impact of the Training Academy has been considerable.

“Not only are we now confident we can compensate for future growth, our current and potential customers are encouraged by what we are doing and happy to offer the opportunity of a long-term relationship.

“We are seen as an innovative and dynamic company throughout our sectors, a direct result of our training.”

SEMTA the Sector Skills Council are also encouraged by what the company is doing and are working with Awarding body EAL to approve High-Tech as an NVQ Center. Agreement Implementation Manager at Semta Dawn Vinnall comments:

“I visited High-Tech Engineering in June to explain the Semta Sector Compact and the impartial skills and qualifications advice and guidance service we provide to companies operating in the engineering and science sectors. I was extremely impressed by my visit on two counts; firstly, by the dedication and hands-on approach of the Managing Director and Head of Training and, secondly, by the quality of the company’s training content and facilities. Everything is thoroughly thought out and expertly executed. The commitment of everyone at High-tech to continuously improving skills and productivity through in-house training is clearly evident both in the positive workplace culture and business results. I am delighted High-Tech will be working with Semta Sector Skills Council and Awarding Body, EAL Ltd, to complement their excellent training programmes with nationally recognised qualifications relevant to the individual employees.”

Ends

Entry name High-Tech Engineering

Entry no: 80410 Region: East England

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