

IMI Awards approved training centres boost businesses' sales

With a significant leadership skills shortage within the automotive sector, companies who invest in sales and management training will reap the financial and operational benefits, a fact not to be ignored during the current economic climate. Here we see examples of two IMI Awards approved centres that have delivered training to organisations and quickly saw a return on their investment.



Candidates from the Renault Trucks programme and AIT Training Developments Ltd.

Renault Trucks Automotive Management Training

Renault Trucks UK Ltd recently invested in a new training programme to develop the front-line management of Renault Trucks UK and their dealer network. Renault Trucks appointed IMI Awards approved centre, AIT Training Developments to prepare and deliver the nationally accredited Certificate in Automotive Management.

The first delivery of the programme has now been completed and the outcome is ten newly qualified candidates.

Matt Burr of KTS Trucks Hernhill, Kent commented, "The programme has helped me to be more confident in carrying out the management role. My performance has improved, I am now making better decisions based on sound knowledge and key facts."

Sam Hindson, Network Business Manager for Renault Trucks UK said "The programme has blended well with my own experience, I now have a wider knowledge of the way dealer departments can best function and improve their performance."

"This training programme has been extremely beneficial to both Renault Trucks and network managers," comments Laurent Farman, Managing Director of Renault Trucks UK Ltd. Ultimately, professionally delivered training programmes can only benefit our company and the staff themselves."

Programme Director Richard Owen of AIT Training Developments praised the students, "The programme standards are demanding and rightly so to justify the award. The result produced a very high standard of which Renault Trucks can be proud".



The H&L Mercedes-Benz team receiving their certificates.

H&L Garages Sales Training

Despite a 50% downturn in commercial vehicle sales nationally, Mercedes-Benz truck and van dealer H&L Garages is shrugging off the recession after pioneering a new staff training and development program.

The Automotive Sales Specialist Award Programme – ASSA – has been devised by IMI Awards approved centre, PAR Training & Development, for the car industry but this is the first time it has been applied to the commercial vehicle trade. The ASSA programme uses IMI Awards Level 2 NVQ in Vehicle Sales qualification, then extends it by adding bespoke training and personal coaching with competence-based skills assessments.

H&L Garages took more van orders in the first months of 2009 than in the whole of 2008 which H&L MD Brett Whittingham, attributes to the ASSA programme. John Fogerty, Joint Managing Director at PAR Training & Development, said of the training programme: "Being assessed against clear and objective standards gives the learner valuable feedback and raises the standard of their work."

PAR Training & Development is now working with H&L Garages to adapt the ASSA award to the dealership's truck sales force.

H&L's Van Sales Manager Garry Marsh said, "We've taken other steps to improve our van sales business since I joined the company, but this training programme makes a big contribution to our improved performance, helping to motivate and energise our team."

An interview with...



Lead External Verifier Body Repair & Refinishing Andy Frounks, speaks to

IMI AWARDS NEWS about his role and the body repair market challenges.

Personal profile

Andy began his automotive career on a three year Youth Training Scheme, he then gained extensive knowledge at Bridgewater College setting up a body and paint training facility for young learners. Andy went on to play a key role in the set up of ATA Senior Panel and Senior Paint at S&B Automotive Academy in Bristol before joining us at IMI Awards in March 2008.

Andy now shares the Body and Repair specialist routes with our new EV Paul Whiteside, which has come as a welcome relief as Andy is married with three children and is looking forward to spending some time with them.

Q What is a typical week like for you?

A A big part of my role includes assessing organisations applying for IMI Awards approved centre status, to offering ATA routes or externally monitoring current centres. For example, an ATA Senior Panel centre approval requires four days, a day to check the assessment, set up, administration procedures and three days observing candidate assessments.

Also preparation time for the next centre visit, general administration, responding to calls and e-mails and of course travelling between centres. I attend expert working groups including ATA development workshops and our own internal meetings, it's certainly never dull!

Q What are the biggest challenges in your role at the moment?

A Managing a very busy diary to accommodate centre activities within set timescales! But this will become easier now we have Paul on board to take care of the mid and north of the UK for this sector. Also ensuring I keep up-to-date with technical developments within the industry which is vital to support and provide advice.

Q What affect has the introduction of Kitemark/PAS 125 had on the industry and training market?

A The big issue is the investment required, largely training for staff and suitable equipment to enable repair of modern vehicles to the correct standards. However, those that have invested have benefited from attracting commercial income.

Part of the requirement for PAS 125 is proving individual competence, body and repair ATA routes are used as one way to prove this competence. ATA referrals have shown that there are often large gaps in knowledge, I think these gaps have shown just how much training is required to bring the industry up to the right levels of knowledge and standards.

Q Can you offer any advice to centres wanting to become accredited to offer ATA bodyshop routes?

A Firstly the centre should produce a business plan. A plan which answers questions such as: who their target market are, is there a need regionally, how often can they run ATA, do they have assessors that have current CPD, do they have suitable equipment and facilities, if not is there a budget to invest?

I would also recommend visiting an approved ATA centre to see what is involved with setting up and running an ATA centre. Assessors will also have to pass the relevant accreditation route at an approved centre before they can offer that ATA route at their own centre.

Q What makes IMI Awards stand out from other awarding bodies?

A I believe that IMI Awards stands out because we are industry focused. We employ full time EVs who have relevant industry background and are on hand to provide advice and assistance. Customer service is also very close to all our hearts at IMI Awards, we listen to our centres, we ask for feedback then do our best to implement improvements.

Welcoming our new centres

IMI Awards are rapidly approaching the 500 centres milestone, adding 34 new centres since the last newsletter. We welcome the following newly approved centres.

AMGR Ltd
Autocraft Equipment
Autoglass
Automotive Glazing Academy
BDM Voice
Camberley Auto Factors Limited
CES UK Ltd
Class Racing
Coleg Powys – Brecon
College of West Anglia (Isle Campus)
DAF Trucks Ltd
Farnborough College
Harrogate College
Hastings College
Hella Ltd
Henkel Ltd
Hull College

Ikram Skills & Retraining Academy, Malaysia
John Gray High School, Cayman Islands
KC Autos Ltd
Kensington & Chelsea College
LOTA Training
Motor Vehicle Training School
Riverpark Training & Development
Roundhouse Community Partnership
South Nottingham College (EMCAT)
TEN Automotive Equipment Ltd
Thamesview
Streetwise
The College Rhymney
The Sales Machine
Wayman Consultancy Ltd
Wheldon School & Sports College
Windlestone School



New EV Paul Whiteside



Covering the north of England and Scottish regions, IMI Awards welcomes our new Body and Paint specialist External Verifier, Paul Whiteside, who joined us in September 2009.

Paul further strengthens our team, bringing with him a wealth of industry knowledge and experience in an ever growing sector of body and paint. With a growing number of centres in the IMI Awards approved network, the addition of Paul to our EV team ensures we can provide the excellent levels of customer service and support we pride ourselves in.

Chief verifier Steve Longworth is currently reviewing the centre allocations of the team to ensure the EVs have a balanced number of centres and regional coverage, therefore it may be necessary to change your EV within the coming months. However we will keep you informed on any changes should this be the case for your centre.

Paul's contact details are:

e-mail: paulw@imiawards.org.uk
Mobile: 07824 844 234

IMI Awards News

Let's talk IT

IMI Awards prides itself in listening to our centres and being innovative with our systems. We regularly hold network events and gain a great deal of feedback at these events and through our annual survey. Over the last 18 months we have taken some major steps to improve various areas of our on-line and IT systems to better support our centres.

On-line assessments

Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control we had to bring the launch of this forward, which was originally planned for August 2009. We apologise for the issues this caused our centre network but also say thank you for your patience and understanding while we dealt with the technical issues that occurred as a result of this early launch. However we have been receiving lots of positive feedback about the new improved system. Improvements include a new look and feel in IMI Awards branding, easier to view and navigate, printing of accreditation certificate with candidates name, assessment and result.

There is also an improved coaching report available for those who have failed on assessments, but this requires an additional link and password as it pulls information direct from the Q&A database. If you would like access to this system which provides helpful feedback for candidates, please contact **John Buchanan on** johnb@imiawards.org.uk

Registration & Certification (web portal)

One of the major issues with our old registration and certification system was accessing it through Citrix. We have recently launched our new system which is



easily accessed direct from the IMI Awards website which provides the centres better access to candidate and centre information.

We are still developing some parts of this system, such as the ability for centres to register large numbers of candidates via a spreadsheet, something we have previously had to do on your behalf when requested. We are still testing this side of the system and will advise you when this is implemented.

Another area that we wish to implement, but will roll out gradually, will be the proxy claim process. We are trialing this with a few of our centres to ensure the process works and our internal systems pick up the required information for the regulators. Again we will advise the larger network how this can be requested and applied to candidates in the near future.

External Verifier Automation (EVA)

The benefits of having the majority of the EV process online is clear, less paperwork

and quicker implementation of changes to your centre status after an EV visit i.e. linking assessors to qualifications, which will be activated the day after the visit. Again we are in the final stages of this project and hope to have all the EV team working with the new system by early 2010.

E-portfolio

For those who have attended the recent network meetings you will know that IMI Awards are asking our centres about the possibility of implementing an e-portfolio system. We have held development workshops with some of our key stakeholders, syndicate exercises at the network meetings and gained feedback from candidates via focus groups. We asked a number of pertinent questions to gain an understanding of what an e-portfolio system should include if we did choose to proceed, also about the cost and resource implications for our network.

We will now evaluate the feedback and take a decision on how to proceed and will advise our centres of our decision.

Collaboration sees second approved centre in the Cayman Islands



Picture taken at Smiths Cove, Grand Cayman – L to R Stephen Longworth, Alan Mackrill, Clive Baker Head of Curriculum Services, John Shillito VP John Gray High School and Shirley Wahler CEO of Education Services.

IMI Awards Managing Director Alan Mackrill and Steve Longworth Chief Verifier recently granted official approval to John Gray High School who becomes the second IMI Awards centre in the Cayman Islands.

The initial application came from the Cayman Education Services Department on behalf of John Gray High School in Grand Cayman. John Shillito, VP at the school worked with IMI Awards on the approval alongside Dr Brian Chappell, president of University College Cayman Islands (UCCI) and Clive Baker Director of Curriculum from the Education Services, to ensure the approval process was as smooth as possible.

With all parties involved working in close collaboration, John Gray High School offering up to Level 2 certificate VRQ, now acts as a feeder to UCCI for Level 3 Diploma. The team also worked with the immigration department to identify the number of work permits granted annually within the industry, to establish that demand will keep pace with supply. Finally they elicited support from a number of local vehicle repairers to facilitate the work placements for candidates.

Offering IMI Awards qualifications provides progression across the two approved centres for the 250 students ranging from 14-18 year olds and mature students from the automotive industry in Grand Cayman. The two centres are providing excellent skills to the local community as most of

them are Caymanian nationals, this coupled with international recognition for individuals gaining IMI Awards qualifications, made the gaining of this approval a much more attractive proposition to both centres and students alike.

“Surprisingly one of the biggest problems the school is facing is finding suitably qualified instructors,” said Clive Baker, “We offer competitive salaries but haven’t secured all the permanent positions as yet so, if you know of anyone out there interested!” It’s hard to believe that attracting instructors to the Cayman Islands would be an issue particularly when you see the picturesque Smiths Cove on the island which provided a serene backdrop to the official approval ceremony for John Gray High School.

New ATA body and paint operations workshop in Ashford – South Kent College

IMI Awards approved centre, South Kent College’s Ashford campus, held a champagne reception to launch a new Automotive Technician Accreditation (ATA) test centre in the Motor Vehicle area.

The body and paint operations workshop is the only one in the south east of England – the two nearest are in Milton Keynes and Ipswich. This new ATA facility in the south east now provides better regional coverage for those wishing to gain ATA in these routes.



Qualifications update

In **England** there will be four recognised suites of national qualifications for 14 -19 year – GCSEs, Diplomas, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships, these will be the only ones that are automatically funded.

The IMI – Sector Skills Council (SSC) is leading development of shared QCF units for the new replacement qualifications required for Apprenticeships (mainly Level 2 and Level 3). All awarding bodies operating in the sector are involved in the development process in some way. The majority of the National Occupational Standards have been revised by the IMI (SSC) and submitted for approval. However, work has already started on converting these standards into Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units and IMI Awards is integral in the development and review of all units. High take up areas are being developed first e.g. light vehicle, heavy vehicle, body and paint. The first units are expected to be accredited early 2010 for use by centres in September 2010.

New apprenticeships will be made up of knowledge, skills and competence units and functional skills. The SSC has dropped

NVQs in favour of Vocational Competence Qualifications (VCQs). There is also a draft VCQ assessment strategy that places a requirement on assessors of these qualifications to undertake mandatory ‘technical’ CPD to maintain their own current competence in the subjects they are assessing. However, individual awarding bodies will develop their own units for other levels and other purposes.

Northern Ireland: Key Skills are being replaced by Essential Skills, however Key Skills have been extended until 2012 for registration.

Wales: Essential Skills Wales will replace Key Skills from September 2010. IMI Awards is accredited to offer these at Level 1 and 2 from this date. Student practical assessments are now available in Welsh at Levels 1, 2 and 3 in light vehicle, motorcycle, heavy vehicle, body repair and refinishing.

Scotland: IMI Awards are working with SQA to gain accreditation in Scotland for some of our new qualifications. The first to be accredited is our Introduction to Vehicle Technology.

We will keep you informed on qualifications developments via our newsletters so please ensure you read these. If you are not receiving them, please make sure you add senders from @emailsuite.com to your “safe” list or they may end up in your junk mail because they are generated from web based system. If you would like to receive these e-mails, please contact janea@imiawards.org.uk with your details so we can add you to the mailing list.



IMI Awards – Current QCF offering

The following IMI Awards qualifications are now listed on the QCF, you can view more details on our website by clicking the light blue qualifications tab then > QCF:

Entry and Level 1 Qualifications – Foundation Learning

IMI Awards’ offers these QCF qualifications which have been specifically developed to meet the requirements of Foundation Learning offering as progression driven qualifications.

Entry Level – Introduction to Vehicle Technology (Foundation Learning)

500/6142/2 – Award (Entry 3)

500/6133/1 – Certificate (Entry 3)

500/6198/7 – Diploma (Entry 3)

Level 1 in Vehicle Maintenance (Foundation Learning)

500/7579/2 – Award

500/7580/9 – Certificate

500/7581/0 – Diploma

Hybrid QCF Level 3 Qualifications

These qualifications have been developed in conjunction with Honda and Toyota but are now available on the QCF. The Level 2 Award is a single unit theory qualification and aimed at those who may come into contact with hybrid electric vehicles, roadside recovery and emergency services as an example. The Level 3 Award is a practical and theory qualification and will require access to a hybrid electric vehicle for the practical assessments.

500/7055/1 – IMIAL Level 2 Award in Hybrid Electric Vehicle Operation and Maintenance

500/7150/6 – IMIAL Level 3 Award in Hybrid Electric Vehicle Repair and Replacement

Air Conditioning QCF Qualification

This qualification has been converted from the current NQF qualification (ID500/4225/7) to meet the needs of the new qualification and credit framework (QCF). This qualification, which is approved by DEFRA offers:

- A single unit qualification for experienced technicians who need to meet the EC regulations for refrigerant handling only
- More flexible assessment process than NQF version – less paperwork and offers centres the option to do on-line or paper based assessment
- Certificate will state that the qualification meets EU Regulation 307/2008

500/6771/0 – Level 3 Award in Automotive Refrigerant Handling (QCF)



Keeping in touch

Take note of our new numbers, services and updates:

01992 519 038

...is IMI Awards' new telephone number.

You can still reach us on the old number (01992 511 521), as calls will be re-routed, but our new number helps us to direct your calls more efficiently. Of course you can still contact your External Verifier.

07827 857 934

...is for online assessment out-of-hours support,

created in response to your requests for extra assistance outside office hours. John Buchanan will be available to help Monday to Friday from 5pm to 8pm.

Please note: this out-of-hours support is for online assessments only. Please direct all other queries to our office on the new number above or your regional EV during normal working hours.

E-newsletter and updates

Centre co-ordinators should now be receiving regular updates and e-newsletters from IMI Awards. However, we can send these to any staff within an approved centre, so if you wish to receive these directly please contact Jane Allan at janea@imiawards.org.uk. If you are a centre co-ordinator and not receiving these, please check with your IT department who may be blocking these as junk or spam.

The notice board at imiawards.org.uk

Don't forget that the noticeboard is kept updated on the centre area of our website. Here you will find dates for any forthcoming meetings and workshops, information on qualification updates and general guidance for our centres.

Regional Network Sessions

We hope all those that have attended one of the of 12 regional network sessions found them useful and informative.

For those who missed the opportunity or could not attend any of the previous sessions, we will be running three mop up sessions:

Wednesday 10 February – Doncaster College for the Deaf (South Yorkshire)

Friday 12 February – IMI Awards (Hertford)

Thursday 4th March – Motherwell College (Scotland).

The agenda will include an IMI Awards organisational update and an overview and update on the qualifications framework.

To book a place on any of the above sessions, you can either download the booking form on the website, in the centre's noticeboard area, or contact Cheryl Kennaird on cherylk@imiawards.org.uk



Quality Assured Awards at Michelin Training

Quality Assured Awards (QAA) is a well established initiative from IMI Awards designed to formally recognise training programmes throughout the retail motor industry. QAA is suitable for any programmes outside the National Qualifications Framework where there is an assessed outcome.

QAA provides an endorsement of the quality and integrity of your training outcomes which is independently verified by IMI Awards. Successful candidates on QAA programmes are also certificated by IMI Awards, adding value to the programmes delivered by training providers, manufacturers, retail dealer groups and other businesses.

Michelin Training offers a variety of IMI Awards QAA programmes at its training facility in Newcastle under Lyme where it covers training for roadside recovery, high performance tyre fitting and repair to agricultural machinery tyres. IMI Awards EV Gary Hewerdine attended an event to celebrate the achievements of recent candidate success at the facility said

“This is a highly professionally managed centre with exacting standards and high levels of customer and candidate care. The programmes accredited with IMI Awards through the QAA process are of a very high standard and have very well planned assessment outcomes providing candidates with excellent training, support and guidance throughout.”



Mark Coleman (Training Instructor Car), Nigel Williams (Training Instructor Truck) Tom Dixon (Training Instructor Car & Motorcycle)