

# Putting Colleges at the Heart of Enterprise

## Basingstoke College of Technology



### Project Synopsis

This project established a partnership of colleges, local authorities and employers. It introduced a portfolio of 35 new professional, leadership and management courses for smaller businesses, particularly rural businesses and prompted several initiatives. These included the New Forest Cookery School and a single Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) for all Hampshire. The ATA is now launched with seven FE colleges. It is supported by Solent LEP and M3 Enterprise LEP.

### Project Aims

The aims of the project were to:

- Bring together Basingstoke College of Technology, Brockenhurst College, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council and Business Link Wessex to provide training and business support to smaller companies.
- Launch and embed a programme of 35 new professional, leadership and management courses as well as skills training support for employers and employees in smaller businesses in Basingstoke and Deane and the New Forest.
- Deliver training or business support to at least 1,300 small firms by the end of funding in July 2011 with an income target of £67,500.
- Integrate college provision in local provision so that the college is a mainstream contributor to business growth.
- Support the development in Basingstoke of a Business Innovation Centre.
- Ensure that each college becomes an essential partner in the business development and growth of the area it serves and that knowledge and skills are recognised as of equal importance to business growth as the availability of land and capital.
- Embed sustainable training and services that will from the start be fee paying.

### This was innovative because:

- This project aimed at integrating colleges with other agencies. It was not about just providing business training to local companies but aimed to embed the colleges into their local economic and political communities where they could directly support business start-ups and business growth. It was hoped that this integration with local authorities and employers would lead to some interesting initiatives and indeed this has been the case (see Outcomes below).
- This was a programme for business led by the communities of Basingstoke and Deane and the New Forest. It was managed by the Skills and Employability Group of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Strategic Partnership, which group has now merged into the M3 Enterprise LEP. Brockenhurst College's closer integration with New Forest District Council led to its immediate involvement with the Solent LEP. Consequently some of the initiatives that have sprung from this project are already LEP supported.

- It directly supported two further education colleges in the realignment of their business training profiles.
- It provided 'Added value' - this programme of support and the subsequent developments could not have happened without the start-up funding.

## Project Delivery

Several features make this project distinctive:

- It did not spring from the colleges but originated as part of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Borough Economic Recovery programme. As a response to the recession, this programme united local businesses, public sector organisations and regional agencies to support enterprise and stimulate growth. The idea for the project was then supported by the Skills and Employability Committee of the Borough Council and BCOT drafted an application to LSIS. To achieve a larger impact, BCOT linked with Brockenhurst College and the New Forest District Council, which has a similar profile to Basingstoke and Deane of smaller settlements and rural businesses.
- It built upon existing work by other organisations and did not 'reinvent the wheel'. Both colleges were members of the Windsor Group of FE Colleges, which was developing a range of courses for businesses. BCOT and Brockenhurst used these courses as the basis for their small business programme.
- It utilised the resources of its partners e.g. the employer databases of the local authorities and the 'platforms' provided by local business networks.
- It joined with other local initiatives and so had a ready introduction to networks and developments. For instance, BCOT centred the project on the new Business Innovation Centre in Basingstoke, which provides incubator start-up facilities, with critical and flexible business support. The Centre is a place for ideas, research and development and encourages mutually beneficial relationships between commercial businesses and education. From discussions at the Centre came the idea for a North Hampshire Business School to embed the training and education part of the project and the Apprenticeship Training Agency for Hampshire. From its work with the New Forest District Council, New Forest Tourist Association and engagement with local employers came Brockenhurst's New Forest School of Cookery.
- The difficulties were, as always connected with selling courses. One problem that caused delays and cancellations was the time at first taken by Business Link to process applications for its employer funding support. This money (up to £1500 with match funding) could be used to pay for the courses in the management development portfolio and, when drafting the application, we thought it would be a real help to recruitment. But we had not been told that companies required approval *before* they could attend the course and at one stage the approval process, involving a visit and interview, was taking three months. This made scheduling courses very difficult, irritated companies and affected performance. Although Business Link eventually sorted out this problem by moving to telephone interviews the delays did affect project performance.
- Next time we would probably suggest lower recruitment targets for companies and aim to work in depth rather than go after numbers. Interestingly, although we only worked with 675 companies (about half the target) our income was £150,475 (more than double the target). This is because even micro firms often sent more than one person to the seminars.
- We learned several good advertising techniques:
  - a. We used postcards to publicise programme specifics. The cards were targeted on companies in industrial sectors and at particular courses. Cards were brightly coloured and, obviously requiring no opening of envelopes, were almost certainly read even before being binned. The spike on the website two days after each posting suggested they were effective.
  - b. We would continue with producing the catalogue of courses despite comments about the internet making such things obsolete. We eventually printed two

editions of the catalogue and it proved particularly useful when visiting companies or attending 'fairs'. It also drew attention to the website.

- c. The website was used by *every person* who subsequently enrolled or telephoned the college. People like to find out as much as possible without talking to anyone.

## Project Outcomes

These outcomes were made possible through the integration of the project into the economic and political frameworks at Basingstoke and Deane and the New Forest.

### Programme development

37 new professional short courses in management and leadership developed and scheduled for delivery over the period of the project at Basingstoke and Brockenhurst.

#### In Basingstoke the project:

- Prompted research into potential development of a North Hampshire Business School – as a joint initiative of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and BCOT. The aim is to provide a comprehensive range of updating programmes and services for locally based professionals. Work is continuing.
- Prompted the development of an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) for Hampshire. Basingstoke and Brockenhurst formulated the plans for a uniform ATA service and contacted the colleges that lay between their areas to discuss working together. Now seven colleges have signed up to the Hampshire ATA (Apprentices for Business) and a further two colleges are considering joining. This is a major development for employers and young people in Hampshire and has the support of two LEPs (Enterprise M3 and Solent LEP).

#### In Brockenhurst the college:

- Worked with the New Forest Tourist Association to establish a Job Shop for members to advertise full-time, part-time vacancies and apprenticeships in the College.
- After consultation with employers and local authority developed the New Forest Cookery School ([New Forest Cookery School](#))

### Marketing and Publicity

- Launch of the management training programme for SMEs at Basingstoke Chamber of Commerce lunch meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010 and at New Forest Tourism Association (300 members) and New Forest Business Partnership.
- BCOT produced two editions of a new professional development brochure which was linked to its website for further information and mailed to 5000+ companies in Borough of Basingstoke and Deane.
- Brockenhurst College produced a new Business Services Brochure which was distributed to employers by the college and New Forest District Council.
- Sector specific marketing (using postcards) sent to over 6000+ smaller companies and organisations in Basingstoke and Deane and the New Forest. Follow up telephone contact and visits.

### Income generated

- £150,465 has been earned from courses run through the project
- 675 companies have attended courses run through the project

## Sharing of Project Findings

Information about the project has been disseminated to:

- Hampshire Economic Partnership Skills and Employability Members. A meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011 provided the opportunity to summarise the project and 'advertise' the ATA. Members included the Vice Chairman of M3 Enterprise LEP.
- Update reports provided at business manager meetings of the Windsor Group (these are the 12 colleges in the South East with the largest business training contracts)
- Update reports provided at each meeting of Skills and Employability Priority Action Group in Basingstoke. These meetings are held every two months.
- Update reports provided at meetings of Basingstoke Business Group – these are breakfast meetings of employers located in the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane and held every two months.
- A report will be provided at the meeting of Hampshire Business Development Managers scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011. These meetings are attended by managers from each of the FE colleges in Hampshire.



## A fresh and unique approach to the art of cooking



Set in the heart of the New Forest National Park and offering some of the best quality tuition in the country, our top industry professionals will help you conjure up amazing results from the finest locally sourced ingredients. From Game Master Classes to Chocolate Heaven there's a veritable feast of courses to tickle your tastebuds.

Our talented tutor chefs also run a highly acclaimed restaurant which due to incredible demand has a 6 week waiting list for a table! As they say, the proof's in the pudding. Enjoy!

- **A wide range of hands on cookery courses**, from one day sessions to 4 weeks
- **Small group sizes** and all levels of ability are catered for
- **Tuition by professional chefs** in industry standard fully equipped kitchens
- Learn how to cook with **top quality, locally sourced ingredients**
- **Located in the heart of the New Forest National Park**, surrounded by 5 star hotels and restaurants
- TEMPTED?

Whether for yourself or as a special gift for that special someone there is a course to tickle everyone's tastebuds.

[Click here](#) to find out more about what courses we have on offer and to book online. Or if you prefer, telephone us on 01590 625324.

If you have any burning questions just email our kitchens at [nfcs@brock.ac.uk](mailto:nfcs@brock.ac.uk)



Whether you dream of opening your own restaurant or just want to astound your dinner guests with your latest culinary brilliance, the New Forest Cookery School offers a totally fresh and unique approach to the art of cooking.

Choose from a wide selection of courses ranging from Pasta Cookery to a Breadmaking Master Class, from Chocolate Heaven to Perfect Pastry.

Bon appetit!

John MacArthur, Chef Director

# Apprentices for Business

Apprentices for Business is a recruitment and employment service created through a partnership between the [London Apprenticeship Company](#) and some of the largest FE Colleges in Hampshire to offer a new, flexible and innovative service for businesses and job seekers in Hampshire and the Home Counties.

We are endorsed by the National Apprenticeship Service, the Solent LEP, the M3 Enterprise LEP and other relevant organisations and offer a one-stop, end-to-end service. The following Colleges provide the high-quality training that forms part of the apprenticeship:

[Sparsholt College Hampshire](#)

[Basingstoke College of Technology](#)

[Eastleigh College](#)

[Brockenhurst College](#)

[Fareham College](#)

[Southampton City College](#)

[Highbury College](#)

## How it Works

### Are you an Employer?

Apprentices for Business is an employment service that makes recruiting junior staff a simple, efficient, low risk and cost-effective process through which **we** employ the Apprentice on your behalf:

- A dedicated member of our Business Development team will liaise with you to tailor a bespoke recruitment strategy based upon your needs.
- We work with you to create a detailed and attractive Job Description, which is then advertised extensively to attract a wide range of suitable applicants.
- We manage the application and short-listing process. Applicants are screened and assessed by our experienced team, making sure that you don't waste time and money interviewing unsuitable candidates.
- You choose the best candidate for the job but we employ them on your behalf managing all the HR and payroll function
- You define the wage and we simply invoice you for the hours that the Apprentice completes.
- It really couldn't be easier!

### Looking for a Job?

Apprentices for Business will help you find a job and get trained while you are earning a wage.

- We find jobs that you can apply for
- We interview you and offer advice on how to present yourself to employers
- We send you on interviews for jobs that suit your skills and career aspirations
- We arrange your apprenticeship training
- Pay you every two weeks and make sure you get the benefits you are entitled to

We continue to support you throughout your apprenticeship training.