

**Best Practice in Training**

**WINNER**

**KMF (Precision Sheet Metal)**



**'The character of this company is impressive, with an apprenticeship scheme set up from scratch, and qualified teachers – a world class approach to training'**

KMF is a market leader in the supply of precision sheet metal solutions. It has recognised the value of people development as a key tool in securing new business, and maintaining existing business. Investment in new machine tool technology (approximately £1million pa) means that the skill level of employees has to match the available technology. The company finds it difficult to fill vacancies due to the lack of suitably trained people, when this is combined with an ageing workforce, which will lose valuable skills through retirement

over the coming decade, investment in skills and training of apprentices and the general workforce was a necessity.

While the company has employed apprentices for many years, due to lack of available funding at local colleges they often came back to KMF lacking the experience and skills required for a modern, state-of-the-art, manufacturing environment. Therefore, KMF took the decision to bring apprentice training in-house, culminating in November 2009 with the opening of an on-site £600,000 training centre. KMF is now accredited to offer internal four-year Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships – Fabrication and Welding and Maintenance apprenticeship schemes. Qualifications cover Level 2 Diploma in Engineering Technology, Level 3 Advanced Diploma in Engineering Technology, Functional Skills, Level 2 NVQ and Level 3 NVQ (based around each apprentice's chosen subject area).

By bringing apprentice training in-house and working in partnership with the EAL, KMF can now guarantee that they receive the highest levels of practical training using the latest technology. Following the latest visit by EAL external verifier Mark Haig he reported: 'it is inspiring to see that KMF recognises the importance of providing its apprentices with

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top-class facilities and training.' KMF operates apprenticeship classes utilising four of its own lecturing staff. This enables us to deliver the highest quality, individual and clearly focussed education provision to our apprentices, from the start through to completion of their advanced apprenticeships.

In addition to engineering skills, KMF also offer opportunities for employees and apprentices to be trained in the commercial aspects of the business, eg sales, purchasing, continuous improvement, and quality. The support teams are encouraged to further their skills with courses offered in leadership and team development, health and safety, strategic planning and project management. A key benefit of the investment being made in its people is the retention of staff and the positive effect it has on recruiting new employees. For example, since 2001 90% of apprentices trained by KMF are still employed by the company. And from a staff of over 250 the turnover of people is remarkably low. By blending the best people with the latest in manufacturing technology KMF has developed an holistic approach to its business that is having a major impact on product quality, customer service and, importantly, relationships with customers.

**SHORTLISTED**

**Darron SBO**

'Training is a strategic enabler'



**Claro Precision Engineering**

'Refreshing to see so many people involved'



**DavyMarkham**

'Sizeable tasks dealt with in an excellent way'

