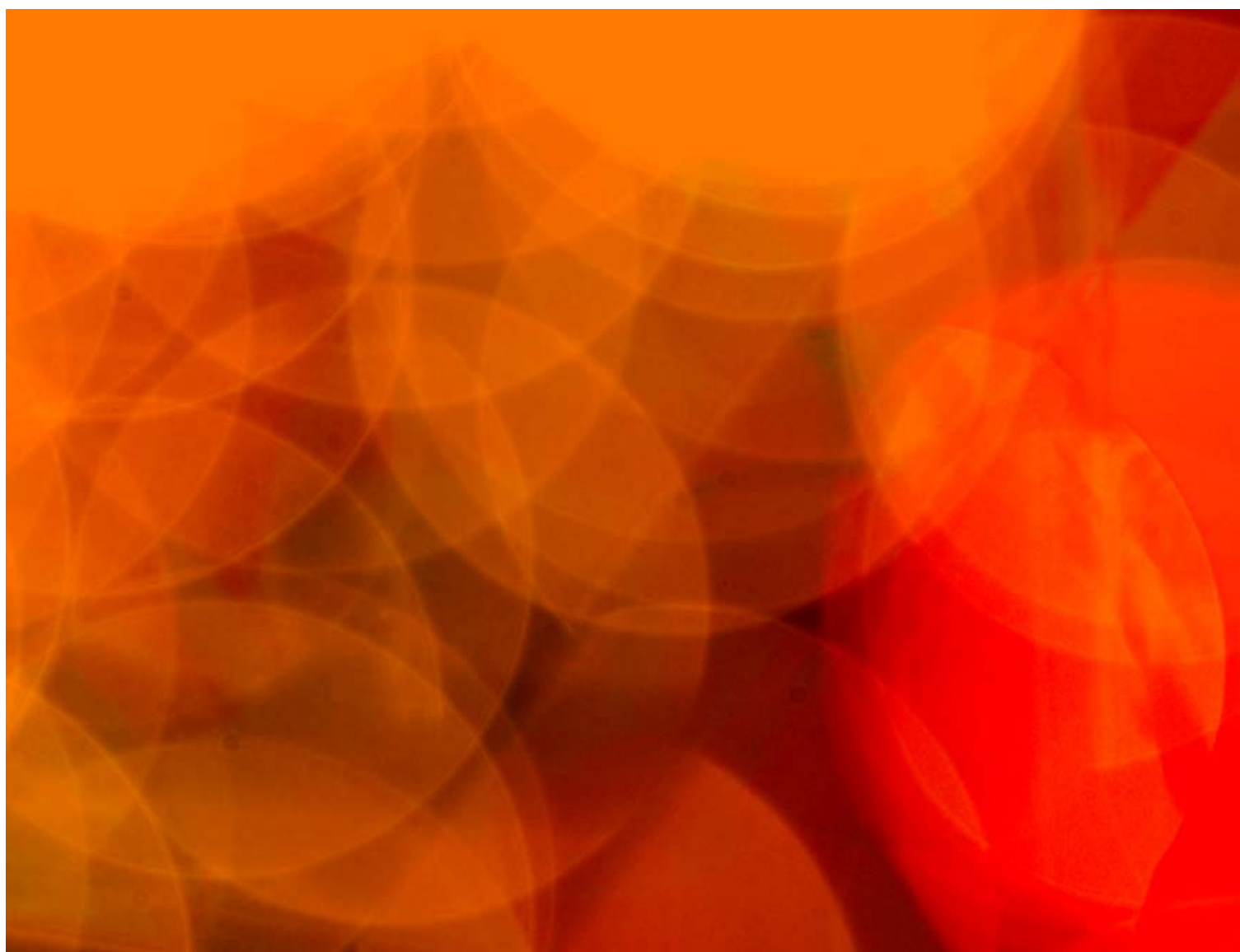


# WCS

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Developing Responsive Provision

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## Training needs analysis in action

Middlesbrough College is improving the identification of needs for both employer and employee through the development of training needs analysis (TNA).

### Introduction

#### **The college**

Middlesbrough College is one of the largest colleges in the Tees area. It has a large Train to Gain contract and has been delivering services and qualifications under the Train to Gain initiative for the last 12 months.

#### **The employer responsiveness unit**

Middlesbrough College's Employer Responsiveness Unit is AHTS-Acklam Hall Training Services, based at the Acklam Hall Campus. They are a team of enthusiastic staff who pride themselves on their employer relationships and are fully focused on continually improving their work with employers.

#### **The employer**

DHL/Exel Supply Chain is a regional distribution centre, home to Argos Direct and the Argos home delivery business, employing over 500 staff.



*Figure 1: DHL Colleagues at work at the Argos Direct warehouse*

### The organisation and the Programme

Joanna Stokes of the Employer Services Department at Middlesbrough College attended a Development Programme for Train to Gain training needs analysis (TNA) event in November 2007. It gave her the chance to consider what the Employer Responsiveness Unit could do to improve their initial assessment of employers' training needs.

### Context

Joanna returned from the TNA event armed with examples and fired with enthusiasm from networking with other providers. She immediately gathered together the team and everyone contributed to developing a new TNA tool. Knowing that the best way to proceed was to find out what worked and what didn't, she persuaded an established customer to act as a pilot site. Middlesbrough College has worked closely with DHL/Exel for the past two years, so, confident in the service that the college have provided, they agreed to assist. They arranged for 41 different employees in different divisions to be interviewed over three days by three college staff.

Middlesbrough used its newly developed TNA to gain an insight not only into the training needs of each of the employees, but more generally into their aspirations and previous experience. They asked about hobbies, outside interests, past work experience and responsibilities – this gave them the opportunity to start building relationships. The 30-minute interviews revealed much more information than was originally envisaged and learners were happy to share the information with their employer too. The team also got information on eligibility, which helped to shape their training proposal, identifying both cost-savings for the employer and time-savings for the college team.

Frontline staff were trained to help them share their experience and everyone had the chance to contribute to the development of the TNA tool.

## Challenges and solutions

In a busy college it can be difficult to be able to step back from the day-to-day work and consider how to improve services to employers. It is also sometimes difficult to envisage how much time needs to be invested at the beginning of a project, even before an employer has committed to any training intervention. In this instance the team committed three staff over three days before making any judgements on the needs of the employees. They kept open minds and used the tools they had developed to encourage open and professional discussions. Using the workplace to conduct interviews helped employees to feel more comfortable.

At DHL/Exel Christine Ebdon, the HR Manager, and Simon Cort, the Training Co-ordinator for the site, were very supportive and managed the logistics of having 41 employees from different divisions in 30-minute interview slots on site.

*We didn't fully realise some of the skills, knowledge and capabilities of some of our staff, until we discussed in detail the findings from the interviews. It has made us rethink some of our training initiatives and in some instances made us look more carefully at the possibilities of the internal promotion of staff.*

*It has added real value to the function of my department and will I'm sure impact across the business.*

Christine Ebdon, HR Manager,  
DHL/Exel

## Key messages / learning points / outcomes

- When you have changed or developed a new TNA tool and approach, test it first. You can then review and improve it based on what's been learnt.
- Find a friendly and supportive employer who will give honest and constructive feedback – listen carefully to their advice.
- Be aware of any data protection issues – Middlesbrough learners sign forms and the dialogue is a professional discussion – you need to be aware of what is recorded and recordable.
- Don't ask for information that you don't need. When designing the questions, ask yourself 'what am I going to do with this information?'
- Involve the whole team; everyone has a contribution to make.



Figure 2: Colleagues receive their certificates at a presentation event

## Links

Joanna Stokes, Employer Responsiveness Manager, Middlesbrough College.  
Tel: 01642 333322 Email [j.stokes@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:j.stokes@mbro.ac.uk)

## Impact

The aim of the improvements to the TNA tool was to devise the most useful set of questions for identifying training needs with individual employees and to offer a more in-depth and comprehensive individual analysis service to the employer.

*We interviewed 40 potential learners, identified 20 as eligible for Train to Gain funding and have 'signed up' 38 of those originally interviewed. We believe they are better prepared learners and we have begun building a good rapport with all. Our customer has been both impressed and enthusiastic with this approach and we hope to have helped cement a good long term working relationship. Input and feedback from Christine Ebdon and Simon Cort has been invaluable – we view this as a long-term investment with our customer.*

Jeff Milburn, Director of Employer Responsiveness, Middlesbrough College

## Top tips

- Talk to the employer about the benefits of the approach right at the beginning; they want to know how it can help them meet their business objectives.
- Continually review and evaluate, and make any necessary changes immediately.
- Involve the whole team – everyone has a contribution to make.
- Ask relevant questions on the TNA and think about how you will use the information that you collect.
- It's not a short-term fix: but a long-term investment in the learner, the staff and the customer.

## Useful information

Middlesbrough College's TNA tool is attached in the next section.

## Next steps

Middlesbrough College has taken advantage of the QIA's Whole Organisational Consultancy programme strand to begin preparing for the Training Quality Standard (formerly the New Standard) and will use their TNA tool to support and improve their work with employers and provide evidence of responsiveness and innovation in responding to the employer-led agenda.

The College intends to roll out the TNA development across all departments as a model for all their employer training, enabling them to build stronger and longer-term relationships with all their customers.

### **Middlesbrough College is moving**

In September 2008 Middlesbrough College is moving to a new state of the art, purpose-built building at Middlehaven, on a site near the centre of Middlesbrough. At a cost of £68 million the site is part of a huge regeneration programme.

You can find more detail on their website at [www.mbro.ac.uk/](http://www.mbro.ac.uk/)

### Individual Training Needs Analysis

Organisation's name	
Name of staff member	
Department	

#### General

1. How long have you worked for the company?
  
2. How long have you been in your present job role?

#### Confirmation of current duties

3. What is your job title?

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4. Do you manage/supervise a team? If so, how many?

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5. Describe the tasks you regularly perform that are critical to carrying out your job effectively.

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6. Describe the type of equipment you are required to use (eg keyboard, machinery, tools of trade, etc)

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7. How do you work? Please circle:

Alone                      Part of a team

8. Do you work with the following? Please circle:

Customers                  Clients                      People in your own organisation

### Training needs

9. **To perform your current job:** What training do you still need (either on the job or a formal course) to perform your current job competently (eg Excel, book-keeping, English as a second language, etc)

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10. **To perform other jobs in the organisation:** What other roles in the organisation would you be interested in doing if a vacancy became available (eg transfer to another section, supervisory position, etc)?

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11. **To perform other jobs in the organisation:** What training or experience would be required (eg machine operation, negotiation skills, health and safety awareness, etc)

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**Future development needs**

12. What are your aspirations?

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13. What training or development do you need to help make this happen (eg external degree study, formal meeting procedures, leadership training, etc)

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**Recognition of prior learning**

14. What training have you attended within the last three years?

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15. What training or skills have you acquired outside your current job that may be relevant to the wider organisation?

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**Action plan**

Agreed training and development to be provided over the next 12 months:  
(subject to approval by appropriate management)

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I understand that the details on this document may be given to my employer for information:

Signature of staff member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of training provider \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_