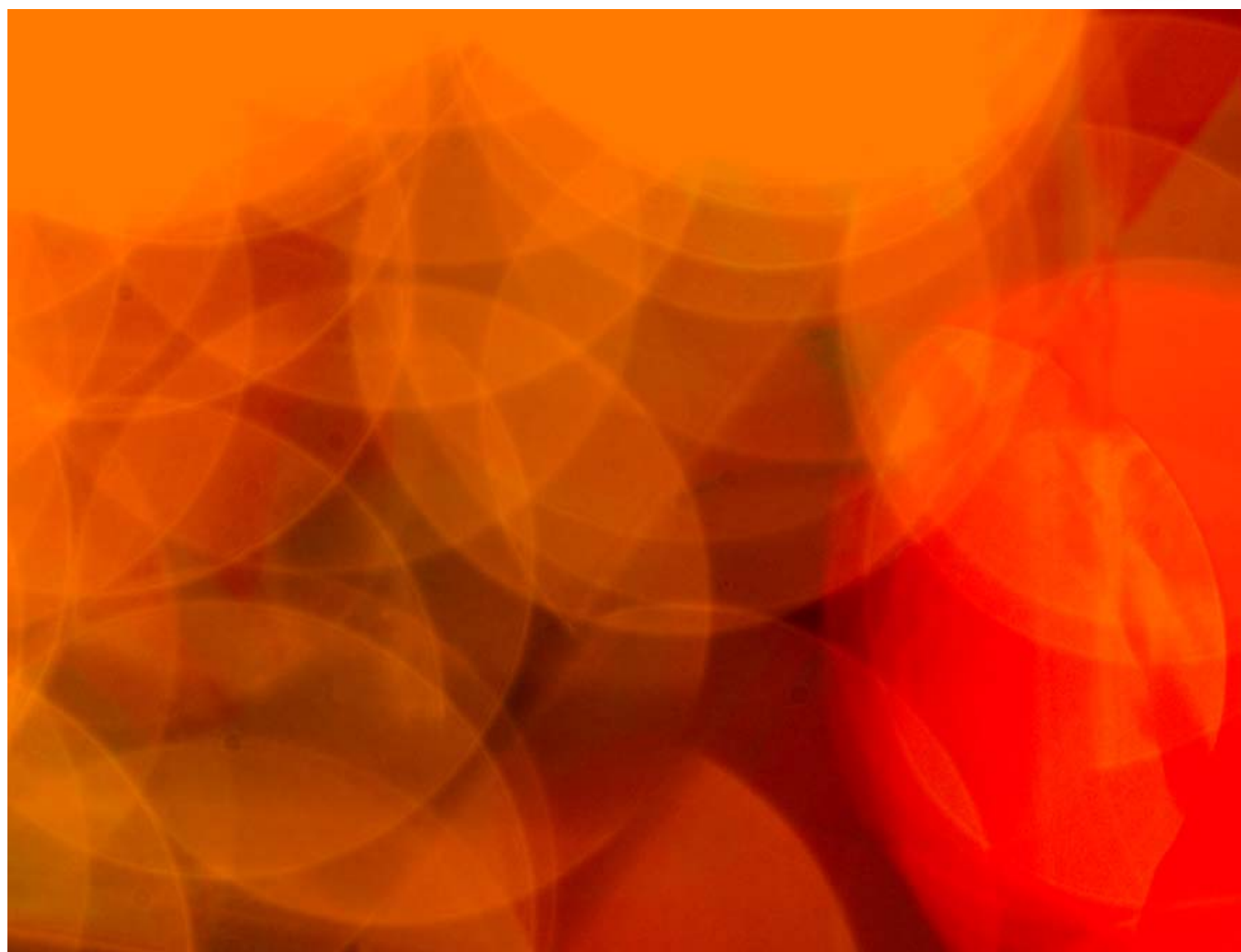


# WCS

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Developing Responsive Provision

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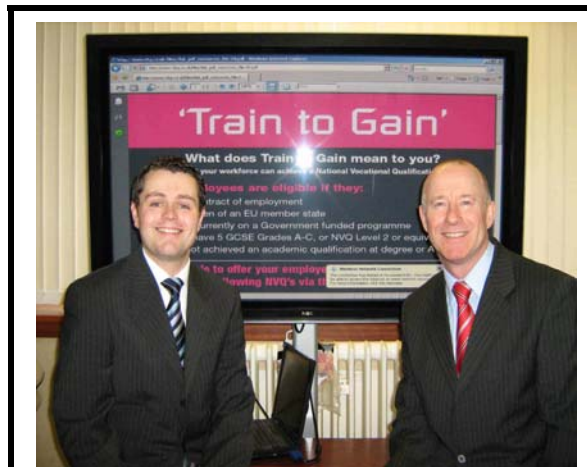
## Identifying training needs

North Lancashire Training Group (NLTG) is investigating ways to improve their service by developing new and improved organisational needs analysis (ONA) with employers.

## Introduction

NLTG delivers a range of training solutions in the North West and West Yorkshire, and holds a national furniture contract. They deliver qualifications through Train to Gain in a range of sectors including furniture, manufacturing, customer service, catering and hospitality, IT, team-leading, administration and glass. They also have a Centre of Vocational Excellence for furniture manufacturing.

NLTG has 200 staff over six sites. The team improving the ONA and Training Needs Analysis (TNA) processes were Damian Crawshaw, Paul Sharples and Michael Hewitt. They hope to measure employer satisfaction and the impact of the training on the businesses they work with.



*Figure 1 Paul and Damian presenting the benefits of the Train to Gain service*

## The organisation and the Programme

The West Suffolk College improvement project supported by QIA's Development Programme for Train to Gain (DPfTtG) inspired the NLTG team to begin developing a more comprehensive ONA for use with employers.

## Context

The team were constantly looking for ways to improve their service to employers and were keen to demonstrate that the training and development of staff can have an overall, positive impact on any business. They were aware that at a face-to-face meeting they could talk through the benefits with employers but wanted to find a more robust way of making that link and being able to review the difference made by the training intervention.

They were keen to make changes to how and when they conducted the ONA, used the information, and went back to the employers to show the improvements. They also thought it would act as a quality check, highlighting what had worked well and what could be improved.

At the DPfTtG TNA event Paul had the opportunity to listen to and share good practice with other providers, examine in more detail their ONA/TNA forms, and look at their paperwork. He knew NLTG could make better use of its information and how it was gathered because, as it stood, it did not reflect the deep knowledge they held about some of their employers and it did not always help them make an initial connection with the employer.

To follow up on their initial thoughts the team used part of their time with their consultant to make some step-changes to the ONA so that it clearly demonstrates the benefits and impact of training.

## Challenges and solutions

The initial challenge for NLTG was how to make the changes and involve all the staff in the process. They planned to make the ONA conversation simpler and include prompts to ensure that they considered all aspects of the business from the outset. They also focused on ensuring that they researched prospective employers before carrying out an ONA. This added to their sector-specialist knowledge and gave a really professional edge to the conversation. It ensured that they learnt from each meeting and allowed them to disseminate that information among the team and provide a better service.

They see the ONA as a document that helps them understand the employer's business and add tangible benefits for all of their customers.

*The key benefits to us of using NLTG as a training provider:*

- *the flexibility to work around our priorities within the Warehousing and Logistics NVQ*
- *their communication, commitment and drive towards success*
- *good customer rapport, as they understand our business and learners, together ensuring the organisation is at no risk when releasing individuals for assessment*
- *enables learning to take place between visits*
- *key learning is relevant to the workplace and the individual.*

Alison Garnham, Learning & Development Officer, Wesco Aircraft Europe

## Key messages / learning points / outcomes

NLTG links the ONA tool to labour market information and measures impact using feedback gathered from both learners and employers.

They hope to link all this to their quality improvement cycle to ensure that the customer relationship management system flags up renewal dates for employers such as those for food hygiene certificates and health and safety policies. The original ONA form has been redesigned to incorporate these aspects. The quality manager and a dedicated ONA team are working with some medium-sized employers to pilot the use of the form and then follow up with the specialist training officers – a 'completing the loop' approach.



*Figure 2: NLTG Training Officers with their successful Wesco learners.*

## Links

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### **Impact**

Although it is very early days in developing and fine-tuning the ONA, there is already positive feedback from employers. Even where training has not been available immediately they have been keen to use NLTG in the future. This will enable NLTG to develop stronger and longer term relationships with their customers and contribute to their overall aims and objectives offering a quality, customer-focused training service. The team are all committed and enthusiastic; they recognise the added value that continual development of processes can bring.

### **Top tips**

- Listen carefully to the employer – completing an ONA is not a tick box exercise. It is an opportunity to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the employer about his or her challenges and future hopes for their business.
- Employers that were used as a ‘test bed’ said they appreciated the time spent listening to their concerns. This has also helped build sector knowledge and show a real understanding of the challenges that sector-specific businesses may be facing.
- ONAs need to be regularly reviewed with employers and continually updated.

### **Next steps**

NLTG is trialling their ONA with some current customers that employ fewer than 30 people and the intention is then to review and reflect on what has worked well, tweak the process and roll it out with all of their customers.

They are planning to ensure it fits with the broker model and begins to build on an overall strategic approach with all employers.