

Two-Way Street

**LEADERSHIP
EXCHANGE**

Leadership Exchange in the
construction sector



Barking and
Dagenham College

LEAD CONTACT

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EMPLOYER

Rooff Ltd

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Introduction to Two-Way Street

The nature of work is continuously and rapidly changing as employers engage with the opportunities and challenges posed by digital technology, globalisation and economic developments, resulting in transformations to existing as well as new occupations and business processes that demand new skills and capacities.

Pathways into professional and technical work for learners as well as the reskilling of the existing workforce increasingly require employer-education and training partnerships that can utilise their respective expertise - occupational, business process, curriculum and pedagogic – to plan, design and deliver innovative education and training. Nine Two-Way Street employer-provider Leadership Exchange partnerships, involving large, small and medium-sized enterprises and supported by the Education and Training Foundation explored out how these types of partnerships might work in practice.

In the nine projects leaders from both business and education and training identified ways of working together to enhance productivity, employment and training opportunities in the local, regional and ultimately national economy.

Strong and dynamic partnerships can provide the basis on which professional, technical and vocational education not only keeps pace with changes in work, but can also lead the way by acting as a seedbed for innovation at work and in education.



Leadership Perspectives

The involvement of leaders from both sides underlined the status and importance of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange process and helped to ensure dissemination more widely within and between organisations. Moreover, it was clear that deep and regular communication was needed to support both parties in genuinely engaging with the other's concerns and ways of working in order to dispel the myths and misconceptions that can so often get in the way of partnership working. The fact that the Leadership Exchange took place face-to-face, was undertaken over a relatively short timeframe and required the production of identified outputs and outcomes was vital. Crucially, this Project succeeded because it had clear short-term outcomes and made a virtue of strengthening and building on pre-existing local relationships, as well as using regional networks, such as the London Region Construction Training Group, the London Enterprise Panel and the London Region Association of Colleges.



Project aims

The specific aims of this project were to:

- Raise young people's awareness of opportunities and pathways within the construction sector;
- Identify the particular training needs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- Examine curriculum development within the colleges involved to ensure a better match with the modern demands of the construction industry (e.g. Building Information Modelling and Management systems);
- Consider mechanisms to attract more young women into construction;
- Ensure the sustainability of the partnership beyond the life of the project.



Project description

London has a booming construction industry but employers report difficulties in finding young people with the right skills to fill their vacancies, with concerns about skills gaps in terms of both quality and quantity.

This *Leadership Exchange* was established to begin to address this need. Over the period of the exchange, the meetings fostered a deepening and broadening of the dialogue between employers in the construction sector (Rooff and the London Region Construction Training Group) and two key construction skills providers - Barking and Dagenham College and College of North West London. It also involved active participation by the London Enterprise Panel (LEP), which places a high importance on the construction industry to the Capital.

Positive impacts

For education providers

- Greater awareness of the skills needs within the construction sector in London;
- Joint development of a range of different initiatives to help to increase the number of females seeking employment within the construction sector;
- In-depth engagement of employers with curriculum developments, including the development and delivery of a bespoke course in dry-lining;
- Development of an effective communication mechanism between providers and construction companies through the creation of a website for the London Region Construction group;
- Increased awareness of wider regional activities related to the construction industry via the London Chambers of Commerce and LEP;
- Greater confidence going into the Area Review process because they know they are meeting a genuine need for training in the construction industry and that their provision is valued.



For employers

- Greater understanding of how the education and training sector works and what provision is available in two of the major London colleges that specialise in this area;
- Increased awareness of the way in which colleges are driven by national policy and how this can sometimes constrain flexibility;
- Opportunities to take part in bespoke training programmes that address identified skills needs within the industry;
- Stronger links with the LEP and greater knowledge of activities related to education and training opportunities in the Capital.

For learners

Although not aimed at providing direct impacts for learners, this project has resulted in some important benefits, these include:

- Involvement in 'real life' commissions for a website, Newsletter and film;
- Opportunity to undertake training as CITB Construction Ambassadors;
- More carefully tailored courses that meet industry needs and develop the employability skills that are more likely to lead to sustained employment.



Key learning points

- Both employers and education providers have a genuine willingness to communicate more effectively about employment opportunities, skills needs and training solutions, if given the time and opportunity. Effective and regular communication is essential for success;
- The involvement of leaders from both employers and education providers underlined the status and importance of the project and helped to ensure its dissemination, both within and between organisations;
- An appreciation that the needs of smaller employers differ greatly to those of larger employers.

Recommendations for developing employer partnerships

- Wherever possible make use of pre-existing local relationships as well as using national relationships;
- Identify clear short term outcomes for a partnership to work on;
- Develop a detailed on-going action plan to take forward ideas and initiatives.

Feedback

'The challenge to get people to attend face-to-face meetings will always be a problem and potentially more so with SME`s but a good way to make contact is through the use of existing established networks, such as the London Region Construction Training Group.'

(Steve Drury, Director, Roofff Ltd)

Links and contact details

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