

Two-Way Street

**LEADERSHIP
EXCHANGE**

Leadership Exchange to
support STEM careers



Engineering Futures
(The Skills Company, Trafford
College and Tameside College)

LEAD CONTACT

Daniel Robinson - Project Manager

EMPLOYERS

The Hyde Group

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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

This project sought to enable Engineering Futures, a partnership formed by The Skills Company, Trafford College and Tameside College, to develop an Engineering and Manufacturing Employer Leadership Partnership Cluster.

The Cluster had local employers at the heart, together with leaders from the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), other local and national support agencies, independent training providers, schools, colleges, universities, and industry specialist training providers.

The cluster brought leaders together to explore and address the skills shortages within the Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering sector. The aim of the cluster was to:

- Join key skills providers and employers to further develop the skills and apprenticeship offer for the engineering and manufacture sector;
- Work together to meet the needs of the economy and create higher level pathways for entrants;
- Create a collaborative and supportive environment to drive sector investment and growth;
- Develop relationships between employers, training providers, colleges and schools to better equip and prepare and attract young people for employment within the engineering sector;
- Improve the image of the sector and clearly present the excellent high level career opportunities.

The project achieved this by developing meaningful local work experience, career paths, job and training opportunities for young people, and for groups currently under-represented in the sector (e.g. women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities). by acting as a seedbed for innovation at work and in education.



Project aims

The specific aims of this project were to:

- Improve the understanding of learners (and their parents/ carers) of the opportunities in STEM based careers;
- Increase the numbers of learners willing to consider a STEM based career, particularly from under-represented groups within the sector;
- Develop a vocationally relevant STEM curriculum which better meets the needs of local STEM employers;
- Link skills providers and employers to refine the apprenticeship offer for the engineering and manufacture sector;
- Develop relationships between employers, training providers, colleges and schools to better equip and prepare young people for employment within the sector.

Project description

Engineering Futures is the name given to a partnership formed by three Greater Manchester based providers to meet skills challenges facing engineering and manufacturing industries. It consists of three providers: The Skills Company, Trafford College and Tameside College.

Through this *Leadership Exchange* programme, Engineering Futures developed an Engineering & Manufacturing Employer Leadership Partnership Cluster that brought together employers, training providers, colleges, young people, parents, schools, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and local communities. Engineering Futures acted as a secretariat and clerk for the exchange and provided a brokerage service between the different stakeholders.

Positive impacts

For education providers

- Greater awareness of the difficulties faced by STEM sector employers in recruiting young people into the sector;
- Development of a range of information for learners about the opportunities available for STEM related learning across the Greater Manchester area, and possible job opportunities and careers in the sector;
- Opportunities to engage with a wide range of organisations to increase awareness of STEM career opportunities for underrepresented groups;
- Employer engagement with curriculum development, which included discussion about new programmes to up skill the employers' existing workforce;
- Development of a trusting and productive partnership between three Education and Training providers, which is mutually beneficial;
- Access to new and emerging techniques within the STEM sector, which will enhance curriculum delivery.



For employers

- Provided an open and supportive environment where employers felt they could constructively challenge the providers, leading to positive discussions as to what is required for Apprenticeship success;
- Increased awareness amongst the STEM sector employers regarding the link between qualifications and funding requirements that means that provider delivery does not always match employers' exact needs;
- Enhanced relationship between employers and universities.

For learners

- School engagement activity jointly developed and delivered through the Exchange which included current apprentices attending school assemblies and workshops, and employers providing site visits and factory tours;
- Creation of "live briefs" provided by University research departments to enliven the STEM curriculum



Key learning points

- Working on a joint project has developed a much stronger working relationship between employers and providers;
- Having an organisation such as Engineering Futures who can act as an “honest broker” between all partners contributed to the successful engagement of a wide range of organisations;
- A three way partnership involving schools, as well as providers and employers, helped the project reach its target learner group.



Recommendations for developing employer partnerships

- Providers need to learn how to listen to the needs of employers;
- Employers need to be encouraged to positively challenge providers, so that new programmes and processes can be developed.

Feedback

“Engineering Futures have visited the college on a number of occasions and have provided excellent information and direction to our students that were interested in pursuing a career in Engineering and I would recommend them to any school within the area.”

(Anne-Marie Maguire – Careers Coordinator at Altrincham College of Arts)

Feedback

This feedback was received from one of the schools who benefitted from the partnership initiative to improve awareness of STEM career opportunities

“Your workshop was really well received by our students. The role model who helped run the event was inspirational! I look forward to working with you next term and many, many thanks for everything.”

(Elaine Manton – STEM Coordinator at Loreto Grammar School for Girls)

“Thanks so much for coming into school today – the workshop that you ran was excellent and all of the students learned a great deal. We will definitely look to work with you again in the future.”

(Louise Barnett - Career Adviser at Fairfield High School)

“Our students really enjoyed your event on Monday. Thank you so much for giving up your time to come in, it was really appreciated.”

(Christine Mackay – Teacher/Work Related Careers Coordinator at Wellington School)

Links and contact details

Daniel Robinson - Project Manager
daniel.robinson@engineeringfutures.org

Employer contacts

Matthew Murray - HR Director, The Hyde Group
mmurray@hydegroupp.com

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