

TAFELINK Flexible Solutions

THE TAFE PLUS NEWSLETTER FOR INDUSTRY

THIS ISSUE

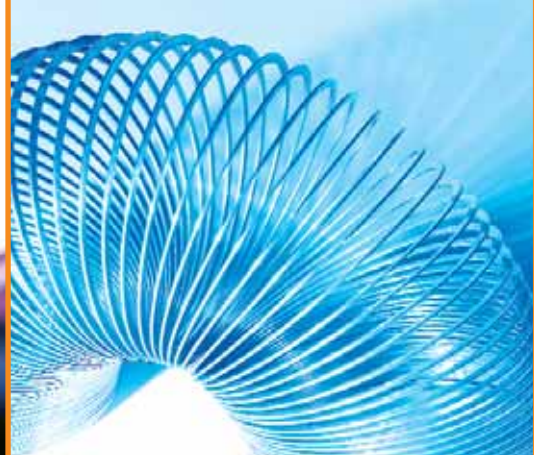
SPECIALIST SKILLS TRAINING

INDUSTRY SCHOOLS FUTURE WORKERS

FRONTLINE MANAGEMENT

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Business and industry need to respond to changes by keeping staff skilled. Sometimes that change may be within the company itself, for example, a new piece of equipment, or a complete company restructure. Other times it is the industry which is going through upheaval, and business must respond accordingly to remain competitive and relevant.

TAFE NSW works with industry to develop flexible training options that directly address these changes. They can be structured to fit around the availability of your staff, and can be delivered either on-site, at TAFE NSW campuses or even online, if appropriate.

The bottom line is, training needs to fit in with the day-to-day realities of a workplace – TAFE NSW can help you do this.

In this issue, you'll find examples of just that. Long-term client, confectionary manufacturer Wrigley's approached TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute in the early 90s about leadership training for managers. They had found that many people had the technical skills, but lacked the management skills to do their job as efficiently as possible.

Now, more than a decade on, flexible management training is entrenched within the culture of the organisation, and is available to almost any staff member who wants to know more about how businesses are managed. The most recent course, Certificate IV in Frontline Management, has seen ideas from participants already implemented and saving the company significant amounts of money for minimal outlay.

Also finding training adding to their bottom line is BHP Billiton, which, together with TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute has developed specialist training for staff on plastics welding. By skilling their own staff in a highly specialised area, the company is finding the dual benefits of improved safety and productivity has the potential to save them time and money as well.

Albury Council also needed very specialised training, following the purchase of a piece of equipment which enables water mains repair teams to disinfect the pipes on-site. The National Environment Centre at TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute has been able to tailor an existing course to suit the needs of the Council and their employees, who are trained up within one day and ready to take on more responsibility for ensuring a clean water supply to the city.

Training staff is one thing – what about when their skills and knowledge is about to walk out the door due to a major restructure, as happened with the Department of Minerals? They turned to TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute to tailor an existing TAFE PLUS Mentoring and Coaching course to their needs. Staff who were leaving the organisation were able to pass on vital information to those remaining in a focused and efficient way, minimising the potential disruption to the workplace during the changes.

The future knowledge workers of Australia – many of them young adults from disadvantaged areas – participated in the 6th annual Summer Schools, held at TAFE NSW campuses around the state. The 3-week course, held during the summer holidays, gives high school students a taste of what it would be like to work in their chosen profession, as part of a real company. Most went away with a much clearer idea of what they wanted to do once they graduated, and a renewed passion for study.

Janet Stewart
Director, Corporate Marketing



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Specialised training adds to business bottom line

Companies looking to increase productivity and initiate more efficient work practices often look to training their staff in the latest skills and procedures.

This was the impetus behind a recent move by BHP Billiton's Technology Centre in Newcastle, which was looking for a better way to construct high-integrity pipework used for transporting hazardous chemicals at the site.

The company is committed to ensuring its practices are environmentally responsible by identifying and controlling the risks of hazardous materials handling.

Previously, chemicals had been handled using flexible plastic hoses. However, BHP Billiton felt that welded rigid plastic piping would provide better management of the risk of leakage. Rigid piping also offered the opportunity to use specialised plastics capable of withstanding higher temperatures and pressures.

The company approached TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute's Engineering faculty to provide on-site training in plastics welding at the Technology Centre. Teachers from the Institute met with representatives from the Centre to put together a flexible training course that would teach their staff how to select and weld specialised plastics.

BHP Billiton placed a high importance on the requirement for accreditation for any training delivered to their staff. The Institute was able to address this need by providing an accredited module in Plastics Welding for 10 staff members who were all qualified fitters. The course delivery was customised to the specific duties performed by staff, and at the same time met the requirements of the course competencies, enabling candidates to receive a Statement of Attainment.

The course was delivered by Gordon Price, an expert in plastics welding and former Head Teacher at Hunter Institute, Belmont Campus welding section. The training was conducted over two days a week for three weeks, and covered topics such as: types of plastics, the welding process, different styles of welding and edge preparations.

'We were very happy that Hunter Institute was able to come to us and provide our staff with quality education and training,' said Michael McGuirk, Technology Centre Training Coordinator.

Q: Want to improve safety and productivity?

A: Specialised training for your staff may be the answer.

'The new skills our staff have will not only improve safety and productivity, but will be something they can take with them through their working life.'

The benefit to the bottom line is expected to be realised quickly, as staff are able to assemble, modify and repair piping systems themselves, thereby avoiding delays involved in calling in external service providers. Additionally, BHP Billiton can now put the new skills of their employees to use during the installation phase of the new piping system.

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BHP Billiton staff can now assemble, modify and repair piping systems themselves, reducing delays and costs.

This was an especially tailored program delivered on-site over 2 days per week for 3 weeks.

Similar programs can be designed for the following industries: manufacturing, automotive, mining and engineering.

Summer Schools benefit students and industry



Students meet multimedia challenge at Microsoft's 'Lab'

Designed by TAFE NSW and the Department of Education and Training in partnership with industry, Summer Schools are a summer learning activity with a career path focus for students in Years 9, 10 and 11.

Summer Schools give government school students, who may be disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors, the chance to benefit from hands-on TAFE NSW training, industry visits, speakers and career information during their summer holidays.

Major sponsor Microsoft has been involved with the program for a number of years, and NSW Public Sector Director Greg Butler says the organisation has much to gain from the alliance.

'One of the major reasons we got involved is because a company like ours relies on being able to hire smart people who can fill a range of positions,' Mr Butler said.

'It's really crucial to our business to make sure there is a healthy uptake of careers in the information technology (IT) field. Not just for Microsoft, but also for the wellbeing of the economy. Unless we can get young Australians interested in a career in IT, those jobs may be taken offshore.'

Visiting real workplaces like Microsoft helps students understand the breadth of careers available to them in the industry.

'These young people tend to think of IT as just programming and software design,' Mr Butler said. 'During their site visit we showed them the range of career opportunities available at Microsoft, including marketing, selling and operations. It really challenges a lot of kids.'

'By getting them in here and showing them things like our Digital Lifestyle room, which is set up to show how digital technology is impacting on every aspect of our lives, they can see the opportunities available to them. It doesn't matter where they end up, it serves the industry to have a group of students excited by the possibilities of a career in IT.'

Successful Summer Schools graduates say that the experience, training, useful career contacts and new friends they have gained from this program are more than worth giving up three weeks of their holidays.

Common feedback includes comments such as: 'I enjoyed learning about the new computer technology. This experience has influenced my career and subject choices.'



Microsoft's Mark Tigwell (left) and intern Alison (standing, right), assist Summer School students during their company visit.

Another student said: 'I enjoyed all the information and knowledge on computers. I never realised how far the computer and IT industry can go. I gained a wider understanding of computers and IT.'

Summer Schools also provide opportunities in other areas such as the music, design, hospitality and automotive industries (see full list bottom right).

TAFE NSW works with a team from industry and government agencies to provide students with resources and access to industry facilities. The overall aim is to prepare students for a career in their chosen industry by giving them a taste of the opportunities available, as well as exposing companies to the students who may become part of their future workforce.

In 2006, the Summer School sponsors were Microsoft, The Cumberland Newspaper Group and TAFE NSW Student Associations.

Q: Looking to hire smart people who can fill a range of positions?

A: TAFE NSW works with industry to skill your future employees.

'We are certainly keen to continue our relationship with TAFE NSW and the Department of Education and Training, and to develop other programs with them, to push the boundaries of how we can benefit all students and schools,' Mr Butler said. 'Ultimately, the IT industry will benefit enormously from this collaboration.'

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Summer Schools run over 3 weeks during January at TAFE NSW campuses and on company premises.

Industries involved include:

- Automotive
- Metals and Engineering
- Hospitality
- Information and Communications Technology
- Music
- Beauty Therapy
- Digital Media
- Furniture Design and Making
- Entertainment



The most recent group of Wrigley's Certificate IV Frontline Management graduates receive their certificates.

Leadership learning crucial to skilled management

A shortage of trained managers prompted confectionary manufacturer Wrigley's to approach TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute to develop management training for its team leaders in the late 1990s. Since then, the company's training program has grown to include staff in many different positions, in particular those who may one day move into a Team Leader or Leading Hand role.

The Institute has delivered courses in many areas, most recently Certificate IV in Frontline Management. According to Wrigley's Production Training Co-ordinator, Drew Thornton, the training has had enormous advantages for the business.

'Staff come out with a thorough knowledge of why Team Leaders and managers make certain decisions,' Mr Thornton said. 'They are then able to support those decisions and share their understanding with other team members. They are also able to take on that role on a temporary basis, if someone goes on leave or moves to another position, for example.'

been used in business planning,' Mr Thornton said, 'including a number of environmental initiatives which have the potential to save the company significant amounts of money for a very small outlay.'

He said another advantage of the training program is that the majority of people who have participated in the courses are still with the company.

'They seem to have coped better with the changes which have happened in the organisation in the past few years,' he said.

Leading Hand, Technician, Peter Booth, completed the Certificate IV in Frontline Management last year. 'Having come from a trade into a management position, the training helped me to think through how to deal with certain situations which arise in my job,' Mr Booth said. 'As a result, I have found my job much easier.'

Machine Operator Dalla Madarang said she found the on-site delivery a great help. 'It was very convenient to be able to do the course at work, and the fact that everything we did was tied to the job made it interesting and relevant,' she said.

Margaret Durham, Head Teacher Business Services, Northern Sydney Institute, said that TAFE NSW could work with any organisation to develop a training program to suit their individual needs.

'The success of this particular program comes from the TAFE NSW/Wrigley partnership and the commitment from senior management as we contribute to achieving the company's corporate goals,' she said.

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Q: Think your staff have the potential to save you thousands?

A: A Frontline Management course can bring out their best.

The most recent course, delivered on-site by Northern Sydney Institute staff, involved 18 employees from various positions within the company. Classes were delivered at Wrigley's over three hours on a Thursday afternoon, allowing staff from two different shifts to participate.

Students covered the core modules as well as three electives nominated by Wrigley's, concentrating on occupational health and safety and environmental issues, as these were most relevant to the company's needs at the time.

'Some of the materials developed for assignments over the past seven years have

This course was delivered to fit in with the company's work schedule, and ran for 2 hours a weeks for 12 months on-site.

The qualification could benefit frontline managers from any industry.

Mentoring helps capture corporate knowledge

When major change occurs within an organisation, staff movements can mean vital corporate knowledge is lost. Trying to retain that knowledge, and to pass it on to staff who need it to perform their roles effectively, is a major challenge for business.

Following the relocation of their offices from St Leonards to the Hunter Valley region of NSW, many employees at the Department of Minerals took voluntary redundancy. To capture the corporate knowledge that was about to be lost, a TAFE PLUS course, *Mentoring and Coaching in the Workplace* was delivered by TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute to staff who were moving on due to the restructure.

Department of Minerals Training Coordinator at the time of the training, Megan Farrell, said the program was developed because ‘so many people were moving on that we needed them to be able to explain or teach their role to someone else in a structured way’.

‘It was a mixed group, because the course was open to anyone who wanted training as part of their professional development, but it was primarily for those who were handing over their roles,’ Ms Farrell said.

The customised TAFE PLUS course was re-named “Work Transfer Guidelines”, and ran for one day. Participants learnt about the role of a mentor and the qualities required by a mentor and a coach. They also learnt to use tools to help mentor and coach people online. They were then able to use these skills to pass on their knowledge to those taking on their previous role.

Staff who were staying with the organisation enrolled in an online support group for mentors.

This gave them the opportunity to join ongoing discussions about mentoring and experience both being mentored and mentoring others in using emerging technologies.

‘The facilitator from Sydney Institute was excellent, and it was a pleasure to deal with Institute staff,’ Ms Farrell said. ‘The feedback afterwards was also excellent. The results for the organisation were obvious in some instances, but overall hard to quantify in that environment.’

Q: Need to capture knowledge before it walks out the door?

A: Mentoring and coaching courses can harness corporate skills and experience.

‘The major benefit to the organisation was being able to capture the knowledge that was about to walk out the door before it left.’

This course is ideal for staff involved in flexible delivery and on or off-the-job training. Participants learn about the role of a workplace mentor or coach, and learn skills to improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

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Mentoring can help staff pass on vital knowledge.

This one-day workshop was based on an existing TAFE PLUS course, and designed to meet the needs of the company.

The program could be customised to any organisation, large or small, where staff are leaving the company.

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responsive training

Tailored course makes the most of new equipment

Sometimes a specific problem requires a tailored training solution, as Albury City Council found recently when it purchased a portable unit for repairing and disinfecting pipe mains around the city.

At the invitation of the Council, specialist teachers at TAFE NSW – Riverina Institute's National Environment Centre (NEC) in Thurgoona designed a specialised Water Industry Disinfection course.

The training, which takes place over one day, is designed to introduce members of the Council's maintenance team to the process of disinfecting the distribution system for the city's drinking water.

Albury City purchased a trailer-mounted mains dosing unit and arranged training through the NEC to ensure that after a broken pipe main is repaired, the water distribution system is brought back to the highest possible standard of safety and service.

Q: Staff need training on new equipment?

A: A tailored course can bring them up to speed.

'This sophisticated trailer has been specifically fitted out to carry sodium hypochlorite and pumping equipment, providing a very mobile operating unit that can be despatched quickly wherever it is required,' said NEC teacher, Terry Bevis.

Albury City has specialised and dedicated crews to repair water mains and other city assets. The



John Bakes (left) and Chris Travers were among participants on one of the first Water Industry Disinfection courses.

introduction of a trailer-mounted mains dosing unit and the training has enhanced each repairer's role in providing a continued supply of clean water.

Teachers at the NEC designed the training program around the mechanical aspects and functions of the trailer. Classroom participation provided background information and understanding of chlorination and the dosing process.

'It's been going very well, and we're about to run a third course,' said Team Leader, Operations, Albury City Council, Anthony Foley. 'One positive aspect of the course is that it gives our repairers the opportunity to ask questions about the purpose of the disinfection unit, and even why pipes need to be disinfected in the first place. Then it makes a lot of sense to them.'

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