

## TRAIN to GAIN (SW) Good Practice



### Case Study Summary

This case study explores how Solomon Training have managed to make the best use of Train to Gain funding. They have an excellent understanding of how Train to Gain works, can benefit them as providers and have deliberately sought to deliver Skills for Life within their broader training package. Their Skills for Life delivery through Train to Gain is a regional exemplar.

In particular, Solomon Training are excellent at maximizing the funding that is available to them and have marketed themselves in an extremely flexible and employer focused way.

### What, if anything, constitutes the 'Good Practice' (s)

Solomon Training take a positive view of Train to Gain and show good practice in their Skills for Life provision and ability to maximise the funding available to them.

In the first instance, it is important to be able to "sell" to the employers the benefits of Skills for Life training. Let them know for example that:

- The training can help the employees feel valued and thus more motivated and less likely to leave.
- They can better understand instructions and are more able to work independently as they do not have to ask for help at every step. For example, when measuring weights volumes, they do not have to have everything verified.
- Once they have a better grasp of numeracy, they are better able to pick up 'silly mistakes', such as figures that are orders of magnitude out.
- It is a 'good first step into training'. The NVQ is a long term process for them, whereas the Skills for Life training is only 20 to 30 hours, which is more manageable to start with.
- They can then have a workforce who are more motivated and able to carry out their job independently and competently.

They encourage whole organisations or whole teams to be involved. They find this reduces the drop out rate as no-one feels they have been singled out. It also increases the 'buy in' before any training starts.

Solomon Training work very closely with the employer before any training starts, so that the needs are properly understood and the programme can be designed around them. They use the employers own service manuals or Health and Safety manuals, for example so that the training is relevant and immediately applicable.

They make sure learners remain interested by keeping very involved and giving them a lot of opportunities to practice.

## How Training Providers can benefit from this Case Study

Solomon Training are a useful comparator for how Providers view the delivery of Skills for Life in Train to Gain, maximise the money that Train to Gain makes available and how they word/direct their marketing.

They find in fact that Skills for Life provision is a good way of accessing funding for training (See Annex 1 Financial Numeracy) They feel that getting the whole team involved is a very effective way of getting results.

They find that the Skills for Life training can draw people into learning as it can be a quick way to get results. Train to Gain studies have shown that people do not always see the benefits of doing an NVQ (or of learning), but if you introduce them to learning with SfL training then they see the benefits and are more likely to be receptive and to doing more training.

It is satisfying for the trainers as they like to see the learners progress and improve and they often are much more successful at achieving their NVQ Level 2 once they have had Skills for Life training.

Solomon Training find it is important to:

- Keep up to date with developments, by having regular contact with the brokers and keeping in touch with the LSC. This way, as soon as they are aware of any changes they can react to them appropriately.
- “Think creatively to find solutions which work for the employers”
- Work closely with the employer, in particular they find that by giving good support and guidance before the training they can ensure they are providing the employer and the learner with what they most need.

## Topic – Skills for Life and Maximising Funding

### Description

Solomon Training are a relatively new Provider based in Swindon. They have already established a significant role in the provision of training in the region (including very good returns for Skills for Life) and view Train to Gain as a service that can be used to generate income and profits for the company.

They market their offer in a very flexible and employer/employee friendly manner, including Train to Gain within their suite of provision:

*“Solomon Training pride ourselves on providing learning that will meet your needs. Whether you are an individual wishing to improve your skills or a business wanting to develop your workforce, we can help.*

- **We make it personal** – We will organise one to one guidance on courses and discuss fully all your needs before putting together a training plan.
- **We give you choice** – We provide a choice of how you can access learning, be it trainer led, online, onsite or offsite. We will cater to suit you.
- **We provide quality** - We use fully qualified tutors and trainers who deliver innovative courses. Our accreditations with awarding bodies are numerous and we always work within a quality framework that embraces continuous improvement.

- ***We build relationships*** – *Our vision is to develop long and lasting relationships with our clients, to understand your requirements and to exceed your expectations.*”

Solomon Training was set up in 2003 by Tania Jones and Wim Vermeer. They had both been involved in education but had felt that learners were not always getting enough individual attention. They believed they could give learners a better experience and use the funding more effectively.

To start with, they offered IT training (this is still an important part of their business) and, unusually, ‘Literacy and Numeracy’ was very much on their mind. Indeed, Tania was one of the people on the pilot for the Level 4 subject specialism course. Tania and Wim could see that many of their learners were in need of literacy and numeracy training and, as they are qualified and had the right experience to teach this, they began to incorporate SfL into their training package. After 18 months they were offered the Learndirect contract so they could draw down the funding themselves, rather than being sub-contracted by others. They were selected to take part in the ETP pilots in Swindon and they delivered several of the SfL contracts. They were given an award for their SfL provision and their learners also received awards for their successful achievements. They were then in a good position to become a Train to Gain Provider.

They have good links with the specialist broker who is therefore well aware of what they have to offer. They consequently receive good referrals from the brokers on a regular basis. In recent times, they have begun having monthly meetings with the brokers in order to learn about the new developments. They have found this to be very effective and intend to continue having monthly or bi-monthly meetings.

“a good first step into learning ... the NVQ is a long commitment, whereas the literacy can be 20-30 hours which is a manageable first step”

### Contact Details for Organisation involved

Tania Jones and Wim Vermeer, Directors, Solomon Training Ltd

### Contact Details for person recording the Case Study

Dr Andrew Dean and Katie Kelsey  
School of Education and Lifelong Learning  
Heavitree Road  
Exeter EX1 2LU

01392 264850  
a.dean@ex.ac.uk  
k.l.kelsey@ex.ac.uk

# Financial Numeracy

Does it make sense?

Allocation	Number of learners	Funding	Total funding drawn down
Full Level 2 NVQs	100	1200	£120,000
Assuming 60% need Numeracy	60	772	£46,320
Assuming 40% need Literacy	40	772	£30,880
Funding without Skills for Life			£120,000
Total funding including skills for life			£197,200

That's an increase of £77,200 of funding.

How does it tally using your allocation for 2008/2009?

Allocation	Number of learners	Funding	Total funding drawn down
Full Level 2 NVQs		£	£
Assuming 80% need Numeracy		£738	£
Assuming 60% need Literacy		£738	£
Funding without Skills for Life			£
Total funding including skills for life			£