

Case Study

Network Rail

Bespoke training programme designed for Network Rail's engineering apprentices



The Client

Network Rail operates Britain's rail infrastructure. Their task is to deliver a reliable, safe and efficient rail network by maintaining and developing Britain's rail tracks. They employ over 32,000 people, are responsible for 21,000 miles of track, 9,000 level crossings and 40,000 bridges.

The Challenge

Network Rail approached VT Flagship to tailor a programme that would deliver a training package for their Signal, Track and Electrification & Plant Engineering apprentices. Their Advanced Apprenticeship Scheme - one of the UK's largest apprenticeship training programme - needed to accommodate 200 apprentices per annum.

Their existing apprenticeship programme was dispersed throughout the country and covered various aspects of engineering not specifically related to their individual requirements. Network Rail wanted a training provider capable of delivering consistent and relevant training to all their engineering apprentices at one location.

The three year training programme was designed to meet the specific requirements of Network Rail's industry. The initial course of study was to give the apprentices a sound underpinning in engineering, leading to attainment of NVQs and a BTEC National Award technical certificate.

In addition to the technical training, they also wanted the programme to instil Network Rail's corporate values, vital to their success in developing a world class workforce.

Working closely with the Royal Navy, VT Flagship refurbished training facilities at HMS Sultan, Gosport, the Navy's premier engineering training establishment to accommodate Network Rail's specific requirements.

“VT Flagship offered us the opportunity to develop a bespoke training and development package that was not available anywhere else.”

**Nigel Ward - Apprenticeship Programme Manager
Network Rail**



How VT Flagship Helped

- Through VT Flagship's unique partnering agreement with the Royal Navy, we were able to develop a bespoke training package to accommodate Network Rail's apprentices. We also managed the assessment and internal verification of the apprentices' portfolios and worked with Network Rail and the Learning and Skills Council to draw down government funding
- The VT Flagship Academy was formed at HMS Sultan, Gosport - Europe's largest specialist engineering training facility - to train the first phase of apprentices
- Living accommodation for the apprentices was provided at nearby HMS Collingwood, where students could enjoy the on-site leisure and social facilities
- Against a challenging timeline of six months, VT Flagship was ready to deliver first year training to Network Rail apprentices
- During their first year, trainees obtained NVQ Level 2, Key Skills at Level 2 and the BTEC National Award in six units, integrated with a full sport and leisure programme

The End Result

- Recognising the success of the initial intake of apprentices who graduated after completing their first year's residential training programme with VT Flagship, the number of places on the scheme increased from 200 to 240 in September 2006
- Network Rail subsequently awarded VT Flagship further contracts for Phase 2 apprentice training (year 2 and 3 apprentices) and a leadership development programme for their maintenance line managers
- In comparison to previous years the student retention rate has been phenomenal, with 186 of the 200 initial apprentices successfully graduating their first year
- The quality of the training provided by VT Flagship has been recognised both by the customer and externally. A recent inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate awarded a high score for the overall effectiveness of VT Flagship's engineering and manufacturing technologies training. One of the first apprentices from the scheme won the Rail Engineering Apprentice of the year award
- Working together with Network Rail, VT Flagship improved the first year programme to include leadership and management training, resulting in a Level 2 Certificate in Team Leading from the Institute of Leadership and Management