

The Road to WorldSkills 2011

It's full steam ahead as the UK prepares to host the worlds biggest ever skills competition 'WorldSkills' in London in 2011. Since being announced as the host nation, back in May 2006, the UK has commenced on a detailed activity plan of all major actions and milestones up to 2011. Once finalised, details of the plan will be shared with all our partners.

Skills Minister Phil Hope commented "Winning the 2011 bid to host WorldSkills was a major achievement by business and the education sector working with the Government. Through this competition we will inspire excellence in a new generation of young people to take up good careers in all sectors of the economy. It is a fantastic challenge and will help raise the status of skills and vocational education so crucial for our future. There is much work to be done over the next 5 years, but the passion, dedication and new commitment to skills in this country will raise the profile of skills as never before."

With the date secured (6th-9th October 2011) and a world-class venue booked – ExCeL in London's Docklands – two boxes on the checklist have been ticked. However, amongst the tasks ahead is the immediate and pressing need to raise £11m to match fund the money



Members of the UK bid team celebrate the win: Front row (l to r) Helen Lamb and Morium Khanum

that has already been pledged by the Government. To this end UK Skills has embarked on a series of exploratory discussions with organisations which expressed their interest at key events in the run up to May 2006.

The road map has also included all the logistical issues which need to be considered, clearly a key element will be the technical and logistical operation involved in sourcing, transporting, and putting in place the million pounds worth of equipment required for the four day event.

As well as ensuring that all elements are in place to deliver a successful event, the UK is also determined to field a strong team of competitors. To this end UK Skills is currently drawing up plans, with the help of key partners, to further develop and expand the skills competition framework to ensure that we select the best possible vocational talent to represent the UK in 2011.

► **To find out more about this exciting event, please visit our website visit www.worldskillslondon2011.com**

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View from the top: Chief Executive's column



Jacqui Henderson CBE, Chief Executive, UK Skills

Just when I thought I was going to have time to contemplate the Theory of Relativity and other major scientific and philosophical concepts I was given the chance to be the Chief Executive of UK Skills for the next few months or so. I have to confess that it's a great challenge, something that I absolutely thrive on and it's a real privilege to have the chance to lead on the first phase of action towards delivering the 2011 WorldSkills Competition.

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as well as for Skills Competitions throughout the UK. For this to happen fifteen years after UK Skills was established is a significant milestone in its history.

Everything UK Skills delivers is founded on its mission of promoting excellence and celebrating success in skills, individual and corporate development and in the recognition of exceptional performance.

Skills competitions are one of the UK's best kept secrets sustained over the years by many dedicated and professional enthusiasts. These committed individuals have always known that the experience of participating in skills competitions helps young people and adults alike to improve their performance, aspire to be better than the best and increase their personal and professional levels of satisfaction.

For a number of years the notion of competition, particularly in schools has been regarded by some as inappropriate and even damaging to those who don't win. Our vocational qualifications system, whilst providing some of the best opportunities and experiences in the world for young

people particularly through the Apprenticeship route, does not differentiate between competent and exceptional. UK skills competitions through Skills Challenge nurture the acquisition of high levels of

skills and provide validation of individual and team performance. WorldSkills Competitions provide this opportunity on an international scale with young people competing against the best from across the globe.

With the enthusiastic support of Ministers in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and strong financial backing from DfES, UK Skills will lead a strong coalition of public and private sector partners and stakeholders to create a wonderful WorldSkills event in London in 2011. Delivering a great visitor attraction, a real carnival of cultures and colour and a truly global experience for competitors, participants and visitors WorldSkills 2011 will showcase skills in a truly exciting and stimulating environment.

We all need to make sure that the legacy of the London WorldSkills Competition in 2011 delivers greater recognition of skills across every business sector. We need to use this platform to ensure that skills are synonymous with excellence and that skills competitions reflect the future needs of our economy.

We've tried for years to ensure achievements in practical, applied skills and qualifications are recognised and valued in the same way as academic qualifications. I believe that investing and promoting skills competitions would be a cool, alternative way of achieving this. I sincerely hope that we at UK Skills can excite, enthuse and engage all of you in helping to achieve our goal.

The search for UK WorldSkills 2007 stars has begun

With the WorldSkills 2007 Japan just over a year away the short listing competitions to find the UK Team are well underway. Nominated competitors will go forward to take part in final stage play offs which will be held in Coventry

and Warwickshire between the 26 February and 4 March 2007. The events are designed to recreate the tough WorldSkills Competition conditions. Successful candidates will then embark on a six month training and preparation programme

in the run up to November 2007.

► **To track the team selection progress and to find out more about the UK team preparation visit www.ukskills.org.uk**

Tea for Two: An invitation to the Palace

It was tea and cucumber sandwiches all round when 2005 WorldSkills competitors Andrew Blair and Gary Collier, along with their respective Training Managers, Karl Vella (Managing Director, Karl Vella Autobody Repairs) and Kevin Calpin (Programme Leader, Stonemasonry Courses, York College), attended a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in July.

Andrew Blair from Ballyclare, Northern Ireland, won a gold medal in Autobody Repair at WorldSkills 2005



Party at the Palace:
Kevin Calpin with Gary Collier

in Helsinki. His Training Manager Karl Vella was recently awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to training.

Gary Collier from Oldham, Lancashire picked up a silver medal in stonemasonry at WorldSkills 2005. His Training Manager Kevin Calpin was also invited to the palace.

Gary enjoyed the event and even managed a chat with the Queen. He said:

"She walked round the rows chatting to people and she looked very glamorous. It was a memorable experience and I'm really glad I did it. It was a bit warm being fully suited, but you have to look the part on occasions like this."

Chris Humphries, Chairman of UK Skills was delighted that WorldSkills competitors had been invited to the bash:

"We often see our sports heroes visiting the palace because of the competitions they've won and feats they've achieved. Like any sportspeople, WorldSkills competitors put in many hours of training to prepare themselves for what is a very gruelling competition. We need these occasions to celebrate their success so we can inspire the next generation of craftspeople."

Innovation Funding made available to Learning and Skills Beacons



Learning and Skills Beacons have found that their involvement in good practice transfer activity has generated fresh and innovative thinking in the sector. This has been of benefit to learners and has contributed to performance improvements in the sector. The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) has therefore set aside funding for innovation projects and has invited the Learning and Skills Beacons to bid for this funding to further develop individual projects.

QIA has asked the providers to include in their bid a succinct description of the intended activity, the likely outcomes for learners, employers and the wider community, success measures, the likely costs

and timescales. In September, the QIA will make a decision as to which of the bids have been successful.

One of the categories that QIA has encouraged Learning and Skills Beacons to apply for funding in is Good Practice sharing and transfer: cross sectoral approach using peer review. The aim of these projects are to help the sector develop a better understanding of the factors that support, or inhibit the identification, sharing and transfer of good practice between colleges and providers operating in the work based, adult and community sector. Furthermore, the QIA hope to help providers learn from examples of good practice developed in sectors or further education other than their own and help Beacon providers develop a better understanding of the factors that support transfer of good practice from one organisational setting to another.

Other areas of activity that the QIA are particularly interested in receiving

proposals on are those that enable the Improvement Strategy to be delivered and that focus on:

- Effective approaches to self-assessment reporting
- Using self-assessment to generate demonstrable improvements
- The sharing and transfer of good practice
- Rectifying weaknesses in own and others' provision
- Using data to plan and implement improvements
- Equality and diversity
- Employer engagement
- Learner engagement
- Managing risk

QIA accepts that there is an element of risk with all of the projects, as not all innovation activities will translate into successful outcomes. It is expected that lessons learned, positive or negative, will be shared with the sector.

To date twenty-six proposals have been received in a vast variety of areas. Details of the results will be posted on the Learning and Beacon Status website:

► visit www.beaconstatus.org

Cutting Edge:
Adele-Liane
Simpkin puts her
skills to the test
at a hairdressing
competition



Skills Competitions: What's all the fuss about?

Alan Stewart, Director of Rainbow Room International

Alan Stewart is a Director of Rainbow Room International – a company with ten hair salons and two beauty and spa salons across West and Central Scotland. He became involved in Skills Challenge Competitions in 2006 when his new purpose built academy in Glasgow hosted a Regional Hairdressing Competition.

How do you think skills competitions are beneficial to students and apprentices?

"Skills competitions are beneficial as they allow students and apprentices to benchmark themselves against their peers, they're also a healthy way of developing and improving levels of skills and abilities. With companies taking an increasingly global view of the way they do business, we need to maintain the position of the UK as a worldwide player in industry, and skills

competitions enable us to stay ahead of the curve in an international market."

How do you think skills competitions benefit employers?

"Skills competitions provide a way of motivating employees to improve on what they already know. It's a great way of keeping our staff on the cutting edge of an industry that is in constant flux, and where styles and techniques go out of date very quickly. It also provides a constructive, risk-free environment for our trainees to experience the rigours of working under pressure, and to learn how best to cope with demanding situations."

Have you found competitions useful in particular for your own business?

"We've used the competition ethos to develop areas of our own training & development programmes,

with a view to driving up the skill levels of our entire workforce. Encouraging our employees to push themselves to improve their skills, learn new techniques, and hone their competitive edge is extremely important to our company vision. If you're going to compete as a company, you need to make sure you have competitive people working for you."

How valuable do you think training and development opportunities are for your staff?

For our company, as much as in the broader sense of industry as a whole, training and development is vitally important. Hairdressing is at the forefront of the fashion industry and is in a constant state of change – what is in fashion today is old fashioned tomorrow. In order to stay at the cutting edge of the industry, skills need to be continually honed and updated. Skills competitions ensure that you keep your skills up-to-date. I would definitely be interested in being involved in Skills Challenge Competitions in 2007."



*David Grant
polishes up his
act at the Schools
College Challenge
Awards Ceremony*

Exceeding Expectations: The Schools College Challenge

In February 2006, UK Skills launched Schools-College Challenge, a pilot scheme with a focus on encouraging participation in vocational projects for 14-16 year-olds. Three colleges from the London area took part – Lewisham College, Hammersmith & West London College and The Community College Hackney. The colleges worked with students from local secondary schools to set themselves a challenge that would test their vocational skills.

A wide range of challenges were undertaken by participating students. Young people from Lewisham College regenerated the playground of a local primary school and also organised a 'pamper day' for the residents of a home for the elderly.

"We are delighted to have participated in this initiative this year. It's wonderful to be able to give the students the chance to learn relevant skills and benefit the community in a constructive and enjoyable way" Ruth Silver CBE, Principle at Lewisham College commented.

Students from The Seacole Centre at The Community College in Hackney produced, directed and starred in a video to encourage young people to think about their future career plans. Angela Angeli, Head of the Seacole Centre said "We wanted to do something that would speak to young people on their own level – these teenagers are exceptionally

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well qualified to speak to those a few years younger than themselves about the advantages in pursuing education."

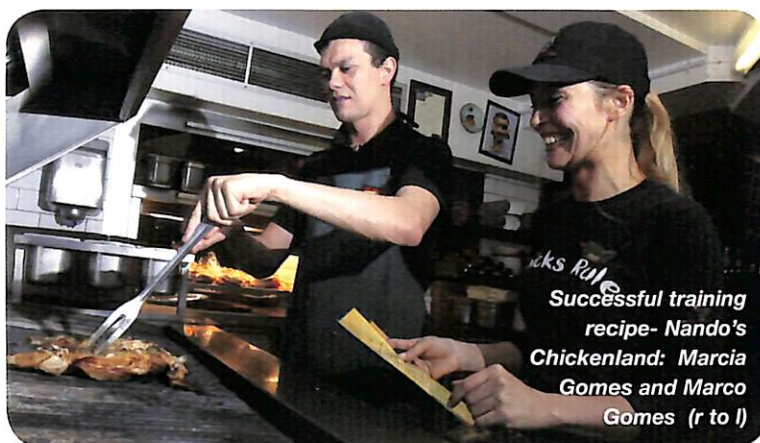
Business students from Hammersmith & West London College took on a consultative role with the remit of improving the college flower shop, which is run by students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Participating students were rewarded for their effort and determination at

an Awards Ceremony at the Laban Theatre on the 7th July 2006. Celebrity vocal coach David Grant was on hand to present the awards.

"We are extremely pleased with the way Schools College Challenge has worked on a local level in London" said Jacqui Henderson CBE, Chief Executive at UK Skills. "We have seen young people become

enthused about learning new skills and using them to contribute in meaningful ways. Furthermore, Schools College Challenge offers students the chance to learn in a practical environment and expands learning from the confines of the classroom into the broader community. The success of the scheme has encouraged UK Skills to explore the possibility of funding and running the project on a national level in 2007."



Julia Rosamond, HR Director for Nando's, an NTA winner in 2005 comments on their training success: **'At Nando's we provide training & development to all our Managers in order to increase their self-awareness and awareness of team dynamics. With increased flexibility in teams we have successfully grown the business from 28 to 130 restaurants in the last five years'**.

Training Matters: Top Training Lessons from the National Training Awards

This year the National Training Awards celebrates its 20th birthday. During those two decades hundreds of businesses, organisations and individuals have been recognised for the outstanding success they have achieved through training. Whilst training methods may have changed and evolved in that time the purpose behind them remains the same: to equip people with the knowledge and skills they need in order to maximise an organisation's performance.

We've trawled through our winners' stories to provide you with our top 10 training lessons.

1. Know your goal

You need to know what you want to achieve. Do you want to reclaim your market share or increase profitability? Setting clear objectives give you better odds of achieving the outcome you want.

2. One size does not fit all

Just because it is the latest training fad does not mean it is going to work for your business. Tailor your training to your business needs. An off-site course that takes people out of the business for several days may be okay for a large organisation

while SMEs might prefer several short stints of training on-site.

3. Learning styles vary

Your training needs to fit with your staff's learning styles. One car manufacturer wanted to train practical, 'hands on' people to become team leaders so it provided 'on the job' training rather than classroom-based lectures.

4. Engage the experts

There are a host of training providers out there who can work with you to provide bespoke training. Contact a consultant or local learning provider which has the skills and expertise to develop or deliver the training programme you want.

5. Communicate with your staff

Remember to communicate your training plans to your staff. You know why the training is needed – but do they? People are more likely to be committed if they can see where they fit into the big picture and share your goal.

6. Support your staff

Mentoring has become increasingly popular in recent years. Being able to talk through issues that arise

on the job can be a good way to consolidate learning and work through its application in practice.

7. Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate

Take a step back once the training is complete and ask yourself did the training achieve its goals? If you do not evaluate you will never know what you did right or wrong.

8. Learning never stops

What is your organisation's training strategy? One-off training brings one-off results. While this might be sufficient if your organisation needs to address a particular issue, it is important to take a long-term view of how you are developing and extending your staff.

9. Celebrate your success

Don't keep the good news about your training to yourself. Let people know! Put the story on your website or in the staff newsletter.

10. No-one is exempt from training!

No-one is too young, too old, too senior, too junior to learn. The aging population means the UK will have an increasing proportion of older workers who will need to have up-to-date skills. And while it is often tempting to send more junior members of staff on training courses, what if it is your senior management that needs the training?

► **To find out more about the 2007 National Training Awards visit:**
www.nationaltrainingawards.com