



Future Foundations Case Study

Background

Future Foundations is a collaborative partnership project-managed by EMFEC and Foundation Degree Forward – an organisation which supports the development of high quality Foundation Degrees.

The aim is to support the development of employer-led provision at the higher skills level by raising awareness of Foundation Degrees. These degrees offer intermediate, technical and professional skills. The project is part of a regional and national strategy to address skills shortages in order to boost UK productivity and competitiveness.

Meeting esp Priorities

Future Foundations helps facilitate greater employer engagement in the development of Foundation Degrees across the East Midlands. This ensures tailor-made, relevant training to develop the necessary skills needed within businesses to help them grow and prosper.

Future Foundations supports the following strands of the esp Partnership's priorities:

- Developing adult skills at all levels to meet the needs of the regional economy
- Improving the infrastructure and effectiveness of skills supply and the co-ordination of skills provision.

Partners

The East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) is actively involved with Future Foundations' strategic direction and provides funding for the project. Other supporters include the European Social Fund, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the British Chamber of Commerce. Future Foundations also works closely with local colleges and universities in developing tailored Foundation Degrees to address employer needs.

Case Study – Nottingham City Transport (NCT)

Future Foundations recently helped the collaboration between NCT, West Nottinghamshire College and Leeds Metropolitan University in developing a tailored Foundation Degree. NCT had conducted an analysis of its management development needs. It discovered that many departmental managers had reached their posts solely through experience and self-developed knowledge and skills. However, as they had not undergone any formal training, the managers did not have a broad and empowering understanding of business and management.

The ensuing Foundation Degree in Business and Management allowed the departmental managers to consolidate the skills and knowledge they already possessed, learn new skills and obtain a recognised qualification. The degree was developed to be flexible enough to fit into the managers' work schedules.

The Managing Director of NCT, Mark Fowles, reported a marked improvement, not only in the effectiveness of the managers on the Foundation Degree, but, significantly, in the people who worked for them.

Real-life work issues were demonstrably improved and people were more thoughtful, questioning and willing to challenge. The finance module of the Foundation Degree also proved to be very successful and managers began to run their own cost centres.

The Training and Development Manager, Mike Lee, found that the Foundation Degree fostered improved inter-team work and functional working relationships for better co-operation. He commented: "The Foundation Degree experience is changing the way the business is run and developing accountability.

“I’d recommend the Foundation degree approach to management development to other employers unreservedly.”

Senior managers at both employer and learning provider level are recognising the strategic significance of collaboration with Future Foundations. The partnership between Future Foundations and NCT ensures that any operational difficulties were overcome and communications benefited from regular meetings that kept development and learning on track.



A Nottingham City Transport bus

Benefits to Businesses

Through their involvement with Foundation Degrees, regional businesses are able to access higher-level skills, which will support innovation and lead to increased productivity and competitiveness.

A distinctive feature of Foundation Degrees is that employers have the opportunity to be involved in their design, development and delivery. The role of Future Foundations is to facilitate successful relationships between businesses and learning providers resulting in the development of foundation degrees with an employee focus. This can result in the development of new Foundation Degrees which are specific to employer requirements. Future Foundations can also help colleges and universities identify regional skills gaps and methods of delivery which best meet the needs of the workplace. For further information, visit www.emfec.co.uk