



Training in Action 2 Construction Case Studies

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Introduction

As a leading Sector Skills Council and Industry Training Board, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI understands the needs of employers and works to ensure a safe, professional and fully qualified workforce. We provide advice, guidance and grant aid for training to help improve construction businesses. Training is not only important it is essential for further growth in the industry and even during these hard economic times employers are to be commended for continuing to invest in developing their workforce to support their immediate business needs.

This booklet will focus on training in action highlighting employers in construction from an organisational point of view as well as illustrating case studies on personal construction career paths.

For further information log on to our website www.citbcsn.org.uk

McAlear & Teague



Established in 1953, and based in Co Tyrone, McAlear & Teague have grown to be a successful and reputable Chartered Construction Company with over 50 full time employees. The organisation’s projects have spanned throughout the North and South of Ireland, incorporating industrial and commercial jobs, design and build, conservation / restoration and community schemes as well as projects in the education, sport, leisure and healthcare sectors.

With the current economic climate affecting all construction sectors the organisation was keen to look at training and other opportunities to help them survive the recession. With this in mind they secured a place on the Construction GB Initiative through Invest NI. This programme is designed to provide dedicated sales development support for Northern Ireland based construction companies enabling them to win more business in the GB market. By participating on this programme McAlear & Teague will address the sales skills internally in order to help win more tenders in GB.

The organisation constantly strive to conduct their business in a manner which is economically, socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable. They recently joined forces with year 13 & 14 students from the local CBS Grammar School who are studying BTEC Construction Diploma courses. The collaboration encompassed a site visit of a stately home in Dromore and an in-depth talk incorporating project overview, health and safety and construction job roles. This site visit helped students combined theory and practice and helped give them an insight into a real life construction project.

McAlear & Teague Construction Manager and Partner, Ciaran Teague, said “In today’s difficult economic climate we are pleased to be able to

support young people who are keen to pursue a career in the construction industry. At McAleer & Teague, we actively encourage construction education and training to contribute to the future strength and success of the industry.”

McAleer & Teague value their staff and in a bid to make staff more health aware a number of employees recently attended the Action Cancer Big Bus as part of occupational health programme.



Sod cutting at Brownstown & Killicomaine Community Centre's

The organisation embraces skills and training, as Partner Dominic Teague continued, “We are committed to creating a working environment where everyone feels safe, is part of a team, is valued and able to realise their full potential. The success of our business depends on employing talented, motivated, professional employees. As a business we believe the more we invest in them and their future, the bigger the results for our business and for everyone we work with. As a registered CITB-ConstructionSkills NI employer we are focused on training and skills and avail of the grant support for training.”

“We strive to create an environment where employees can develop and grow in an inspiring team environment and are committed to the principles of Investors in People which forms the cornerstone of our employment approach. Our staff turnover continues to be one of the lowest in the sector with in excess of 60% of staff having worked within the company for 10 years or more and some members 30 years plus, helping to build long-term partnerships with our clients.”

McAleer & Teague are pleased to have recently secured some new local contracts such as, amongst others, extension and refurbishment works to Brownstown & Killicomaine Community Centres for Craigavon Borough Council and hope in the near future to extend more contracts in the GB market.

John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd



Co. Antrim company John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd is one of the leading civil engineering and road surfacing companies in Northern Ireland and are training and upskilling their workforce for the good of the company both now and for the future.

Set up 60 years John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd has an established reputation for quality, reliability and exceptional service. The company has a range of expertise to carry out wide varying projects including, but not limited to, road construction and maintenance, surface treatments, car parks and environmental schemes, coastal and inland waterway works, demolition and sports pitches.

John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd utilize their extensive experience, skilled technical and operational workforce, broad range of plant and equipment resources, and long standing relationships with specialist partners to deliver projects to both the public and private sectors. The company has worked on some high level contracts in particular in the public sector including DRD Roads Service, Central Procurement Directorate, various Local Councils and Education and Library Boards.

The company have always put a high emphasis on staff training and this has been emphasised even further in light of the current economic climate. There has been a focus to ensure that employees are trained and competent not only within their own job role but other roles within their area; in ensuring they have the right people within the company who can transfer their knowledge and skills to other employees by means of internal training.



John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd working on a recent project.

In order to help with the financial aspect of formal training John McQuillan (Contracts) Ltd have benefited from CITB-ConstructionSkills NI's grant scheme. As a registered employer the company are entitled to apply for grants to support training and development within their organisation.

By expanding the internal compliance team and focusing on management and supervisory training the company is now well equipped to work on larger contracts both effectively and efficiently.

Construction Employers Federation support training initiative



CITB-ConstructionSkills NI and Construction Employers Federation - Addressing key performance management issues in the local construction industry.

As an Industry Training Board and Sector Skills Council, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI has the remit of encouraging training across the range of occupations within the Northern Ireland construction industry. The economic climate and the overall downturn in industry activity have meant a change in way people train and think about training. This has been reflected in the new tiered grant system implemented by CITB-ConstructionSkills NI to address the budget available and to make their support more effective and relevant to construction employers.

Tier 2 grants are targeted at areas identified by the industry representative bodies as critical to their members in dealing with the current economic climate. Tier 2 helps fund demand led training within the local construction industry and is a more proactive and flexible way of supporting the industry.

Since the inception of Tier 2 grant funding, the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) have promoted a Performance Improvement Programme to provide construction companies with

proven, practical methods for reducing costs and improving profitability. Since 2010 over 30 companies have participated in this training which involves 6 individual workshops and mentoring sessions.

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI said, “Helping companies work together to improve

profitability in this current climate is exactly what we envisaged our funding to do. CEF have been working closely in partnership with us regarding this training initiative and have embraced Tier 2 funding to facilitate additional training on sustainable construction, setting strategic direction and pre-qualification questionnaires.”

John Armstrong Managing Director, CEF said, “Construction companies have never experienced a downturn as bad as the current one and tailored training programmes will help develop their skillsets to address the current difficulties and grasp new opportunities. The Tier 2 funding made available from CITB-ConstructionSkills NI has made it possible for us to assist our members by running the Performance Improvement Programme and other high value, high impact training. All participants have had the determination to face challenges head on and embrace change for the benefit of their organisation.”

For further information on the forthcoming Performance Improvement Programme contact CEF on 028 9087 7143.



Barry Neilson and John Armstrong launching the Performance Improvement Programme.

Northern Regional College addressing Responsible Sourcing of Materials for local construction industry



Northern Regional College (NRC) has campuses in Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey.

Over the past three years NRC has been addressing the issue of Responsible Sourcing of Materials (RSM) in the Construction Industry. RSM is an important aspect of the low carbon economy as it encompasses all stages of material production and use including; sourcing raw materials, manufacturing, product use, recycling and waste management. Within the current economic environment the challenge was to find what NRC could do to help SMEs in NI construction industry show that they are committed to RSM. The RSM Programme was funded by the Department for Employment & Learning (DEL) under the Employer Support Programme.

The challenge was met with a programme of bespoke workshops for contractors and their supply chains. ‘State of the art’ tools were used to assess the participant SMEs for Responsible Sourcing and then to create action plans that would assist them to meet the growing number of RSM requirements set by corporate clients and Government Procurement bodies. Funding for contractors to take part in the training was provided by CITB-ConstructionSkills NI in the form of Tier 2 Grants which are designed to directly fund training delivered to employers at little or no cost.

A total of 150 NI contractors (14 leading main contractors and their respective supply chains) have completed the training over the past three years and now know how they currently perform with regards to

RSM. Two celebratory events have been held to award participants with certificates and acknowledge their interest and success in this increasingly important aspect of sustainable construction. Participants have included Gilbert Ash, McAleer & Rushe, John McQuillan Contracts, Pattons and Henry Brothers.



Left to right: Michael Tennyson (NRC Lecturer and Architect), Scott Bell (health, safety & environmental manager, MSM contracts), Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI, Jim Thompson Maurice Stevenson Ltd and Declan Heggarty (NRC Lecturer and Quantity Surveyor).

Director of NRC Trevor Neilands highlighted how the programme demonstrated the benefits of achieving a greater understanding of the RSM process:

“The training programme is the tool which enables large construction companies and their smaller SME subcontractors to work together to develop a responsible sourcing policy. The construction industry can demonstrate to their clients how responsible sourcing is at the heart of their business process thereby assisting their client’s drive to corporate social responsibility.”

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive of CITB - ConstructionSkills NI, who helped fund the scheme stressed the value of the training programme to the industry:

“In today’s challenging economic climate the construction industry is taking every step to ensure it can secure new business and sustainability is a key factor. I congratulate all those who have completed this programme and are implementing their action plans and new procedures to achieve sustainability.”

NRC have prepared plans to promote the programme further in conjunction with partners across the UK as well as continuing development of the RSM micro-site for use with prospective clients and consultants. Visit <http://rsm.nrc.ac.uk/>

For further information on this programme contact:

Declan Heggarty 07595 362912

Michael Tennyson 07718 33918

Federation of Master Builders support construction training



The Federation of Master Builders improves provision of training for the SME construction sector through CITB-ConstructionSkills NI funding

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) has provided various training courses specifically for the SME construction sector in Northern Ireland. This training has been supported by CITB-ConstructionSkills NI and funded through their Tier two funding scheme.

The training to date has focused on three main areas which were identified as key for the industry from a Training Needs Analysis completed by the FMB in Northern Ireland.

Green Construction

Firstly companies were given the opportunity to attend a four module workshop on Green Construction. The aim of this workshop was to increase awareness of 'green' construction processes and enable companies to successfully implement the recent changes in building regulations. The course also gave attendees an understanding of renewable technologies and the skills to introduce energy efficiency measures into building practice.

Tendering & Procurement

The second training programme was developed to assist SME construction companies with tendering and procurement. The 2 day programme included an introduction to tendering and procurement principles, the pre-qualification process, submitting tenders and bids and managing the construction contract. It gave attendees the necessary skills to successfully bid for and secure construction work. Estimating & Pricing

And the third set of training focused on estimating and pricing work to assist SME companies better understand pricing and ensure optimum use of resource within their company.

Over 140 companies attended the various training courses throughout the province. Feedback from all courses was positive with a number of companies putting into practice the knowledge gained to enhance their profitability and win work.

Maire Nawaz, FMB NI Director said,

‘Training provided through Tier 2 funding by CITB ConstructionSkills NI is very welcomed by the construction industry and especially those working in the SME sector. Tailoring courses specifically for the SME sector means that the content is relevant. Providing funding has encouraged companies to attend. CITB-ConstructionSkills NI working with industry bodies, such as the FMB, has made training more accessible to the industry. FMB has been very pleased with the numbers attending and positive feedback generated. We hope to run more of this type of training in the years to come.’



Tendering training at GRAHAM Construction.

Concrete qualification success for local Lurgan company



Lurgan based Norman Emerson Group have recently qualified 13 employees to NVQ Level 2 in Concrete Flooring. The company have completed these qualifications as part of the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project which will assess 500 unqualified employed construction workers to NVQ Level 2.

Already a successful company Norman Emerson group was set up 68 years ago specialising in supplying and laying concrete to the Construction Industry and has further diversified into other areas including Horticultural solution, and Natural Stone decorative Hard Landscaping supplies. As a family company Norman Emerson have been focused on staff development and encourage training and development and it was ideal that they became involved in the Qualifying the Existing Workforce Project.

This project is a joint partnership between CITB-ConstructionSkills NI and the Joint Council for the Building & Civil Engineering Industry supported and funded by the Department for Employment and Learning.

Norman Emerson Group have undertaken the assessment via McKinney Plant and Safety, one of the 10 assessment centres involved in delivering the project.

Colin Emerson, Director (Operations) with Norman Emerson Group said, **“In this industry it is all about being ahead of the game. The whole qualification process from start to finish was easy. The assessment centre McKinney Plant and Safety was cooperative and helpful in the overall assessement route. Qualifications are good for staff morale and company profile and most importantly in this economic climate it was free.”**

Michael McKinney, McKinney Plant and Safety said, “This project gives people proof of their competence at no cost to them or their company. It is an easy process and helps increase and maintain qualifications across the whole of the local construction industry.

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI said, “The 13 employees qualified from Norman Emerson Group are the largest number from the same company to be qualified through the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project. It is encouraging to see a company invest their time and effort in to qualifying their staff. The essence of the project is to address the skills levels required for the industry now and in the future. We encourage all construction workers to sign up and claim their FREE training”

For more information on the scheme, log on to www.citbcsni.org.uk and follow the links to FREE NVQs.



Colin Emerson Production Director and Anthony MConville Contracts Manager with some of their employees that were awarded their NVQ.



Co Tyrone firm first to qualify the existing workforce

McKinney Plant & Safety is one of the 10 Assessment centres involved in the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project, which will qualify 500 unqualified, employed construction workers to NVQ Level 2.

This initiative is a partnership between CITB-ConstructionSkills NI and the Joint Council for the Building & Civil Engineering Industry supported and funded by the Department for Employment and Learning.

McKinney Plant & Safety have been in operation for 8 years, specialise in plant operator training and assessment courses and offer a full range of health and safety services. The company were first off the mark to get candidates registered and have qualified the first candidate to complete of the project, Christopher McSorley.

Christopher (46), a self-employed plant operator has been working in construction for 18 years and has recently been involved in contracts with Lagan Construction, Blakedown Landscaping and Reilly Construction. He has completed the NVQ Level 2 in Plant Operations (Construction) Excavating Plant through the Experienced Worker Practical Assessment route which builds upon the candidate's level of experience, through discussion and practical assessment according to NVQ Level 2 requirements.

Christopher undertook his assessments through McKinney Plant & Safety and said, “This was a great opportunity to get assessed and gain recognition for the experience I have and it was FREE. All I had to do was contact the assessment centre who gave me all the details, registered me for the scheme and assessment quickly followed. It was an easy process and I have an NVQ Level 2 at the end of it. This helps me to be more employable, to gain access to higher profile sites, and gives me more work opportunities for the future.”

Hazel Irwin, Centre Manager at McKinney Plant & Safety said, “We are pleased to be involved in this project and are delighted to have completed the first of many to be qualified. We have the contract through the ‘Qualifying the Existing Workforce’ project for many of the occupations which include: plant operations, general construction operations, painting & decorating, steel fixing, concrete operations and blacktop. This project will help enhance and build on the skills that already exist in the local construction industry. It will also help employers gain contracts through tender opportunities where these qualifications are becoming more of a requirement.”

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive CITB-ConstructionSkills NI said, “It is great to see the project take off and start to see the results. Well done to McKinney Plant & Safety and Christopher for achieving the first FREE NVQ . The essence of ‘Qualifying the Existing Workforce’ is to address the skills levels required for the industry now and in the future. We encourage construction workers to sign up and claim their FREE training not only to help themselves but also the local industry.”



For more information log on to www.citbcsni.org.uk and follow the links for FREE NVQ's.



Local Family claim their FREE construction NVQ's

Building Learning NI is one of the 10 assessment centres involved in the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project which will assess 500 unqualified employed construction workers to NVQ Level 2.

This initiative is a partnership between CITB-ConstructionSkills NI and the Joint Council for the Building & Civil Engineering Industry supported and funded by the Department for Employment and Learning.

Building Learning NI have offices in Ballycastle and Belfast. The company specialise in training and assessment in Construction. They have been working hard to promote the free NVQ's and now have got 4 members of the one family qualified.

Alan Parks, Robert Ronald Parks and Robert Albert Parks and Nigel Parks have achieved Level 2 Specialist Concrete Operations in situ flooring. This qualification was completed via the Portfolio Building Route whereby the candidates build a portfolio of evidence from a range of sources.

The Parks family are from Lurgan and they work together as a highly qualified unit within Northern Ireland and they have been working in construction for over 25 years. They all took undertook their assessments through Building Learning NI.

Robert Albert Parks said, “We were looking to improve our skills and qualifications and this scheme was ideal. It has opened a range of

opportunities for us and we are now researching other areas. We would like to train further in areas so we can be recognised as specialists in our field and help gain additional work as a result.”

Mike Turner, Building Learning NI said, “Construction workers don’t realize the amount of knowledge and skill they have until it is written down. This scheme gives people proof of their competence at no cost to them or their company. It is an easy process and helps increase and maintain qualifications across the whole of the local construction industry.”

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB-ConstructionSkills NI said, “Congratulations to the Parks, the first family to progress through the Qualifying the Existing Workforce scheme. The essence of the project is to address the skills levels required for the industry now and in the future. We encourage all construction workers to sign up and claim their FREE training.”

For more information on the scheme, log on to www.citbcsni.org.uk and follow the links to FREE NVQs.



The Parks Family celebrating NVQ success.

Heritage in action: Paula Sheppard



CITB-ConstructionSkills in NI secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund through its Skills for the Future Programme to develop traditional skills in the local built heritage sector. Paula Sheppard from Lurgan Co. Armagh has been involved in the Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI project working on decoration, restoration and conservation of local heritage projects.

Paula studied Fine Art and Creative Imaging in DeMonfort University and John Moores University and always had an interest in various periods of decoration. As part of the project Paula had the opportunity to work with Decowell Decorative Arts and to use her skills in a number of jobs including the decoration of organ pipes in The Guildhall, Derry, lettering of a Titanic Statue at City Hall Belfast and restoration of Letterkenny Cathedral.

Speaking on her experience during the project Paula said, “I have always been interested in historic buildings and decorative art within them and I wanted to learn more. There are a variety of jobs involved in decoration and restoration and I am glad I had an opportunity to work on some wonderful projects. I learnt lots of new skills and techniques and how important it is to use the correct materials and approach for each individual job.”



Paula Sheppard working on heritage restoration as part of Sustainable Building Skills in NI project.

Throughout the project Paula gained an NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Heritage Skills (Construction) - Decorative Occupations and now plans to build upon the experience and use skills and knowledge and apply them to upcoming built heritage jobs in the future.

For further information on the Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI project and other built heritage work that CITB-ConstructionSkills NI are involved in log on to www.citbcsni.org.uk/heritage

Heritage in action: John Beattie



CITB-ConstructionSkills in NI secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund through its Skills for the Future Programme to develop traditional skills in the local built heritage sector. John Beattie from Co Tyrone has been involved in the Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI project working primarily on thatching, in particular the repair and maintenance of thatched roofs in the Ulster American Folk Park and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

John grew up on a farm on the outskirts of Omagh and studied Ancient History and Archaeology at Queens University before working on the conservation of historic structures with Carrig Conversation.

Speaking about his experience working on the project John said, “I have always been passionate about built heritage and in particular the survival of traditional building skills. It was a pleasure to be part of this project where I had the opportunity to use ‘stitch-in-time’ thatching techniques on key buildings at the Ulster American Folk Park. Given that there are only a small number of working thatchers, I am proud to help sustain this skill for the future.”

“I have learnt a lot throughout the course of the programme but in particular I have learnt the importance of good preparation. It is important to prepare your scollops and comb the straw in the depths of winter so that you can make the most of the dry bright weather in the spring and summer.”



John Beattie putting his thatching skills to use in the Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI project

Throughout the project John gained NVQ Level 3 in Roofing Occupations (Construction)-Thatching.

John hopes to use the knowledge and experience gained to continue working within the traditional heritage sector and has already secured a contract to thatch a turf stack.

For further information on the Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI project and other built heritage work that CITB-ConstructionSkills NI are involved in log on to www.citbcsni.org.uk/heritage



Also in the series - Training in Action, Case Studies Jan 2012 .

The Construction Industry Training Board (Northern Ireland) was established in 1964 under the Industrial Training Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 (superseded by the Industrial Training Northern Ireland (Order) 1984). It is responsible for all in-scope construction employers (out of scope companies include electrical and building services engineering companies) in Northern Ireland. Its remit is to 'encourage adequate training of persons employed or intending to be employed in the construction industry'.

ConstructionSkills is the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry and was established in 2003. It covers the whole of the UK and both contractors and professional services companies. Its role is raising employer engagement, demand and investment in skills; ensuring authoritative labour market information for its sector; and developing national occupational standards and ensuring qualifications meet employer needs. ConstructionSkills is a partnership between CITB-ConstructionSkills (GB), CITB (NI) and CIC (the Construction Industry Council).

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CITB-ConstructionSkills, CIC and CITB-ConstructionSkills Northern Ireland are working as ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for Construction