

## **Business Benefits of Apprenticeships**

At the employer workshop on Apprenticeships in Ipswich in July, Lee Cooper of Seafish explained some of the *bottom line benefits to businesses* that are involved in fish and shellfish Apprenticeships.

**Staff recruitment:** Several businesses have reported that although they have struggled to recruit new staff over a period of several months, once the vacancy was associated with an Apprenticeship the quantity and quality of applicants significantly improved, allowing vacancies to be filled quickly.

One Humberside business reported that individuals from 20 miles away were applying for the kind of position that would usually only attract applicants from the immediate vicinity.

The quality of applicants is also likely to improve, with more people treating the vacancy as a serious longer term career option.

**Staff Retention:** It is widely acknowledged that Apprentices stay with their employers for longer after completion of their programme.. It is still too early in our apprenticeship programmes to know if this is the case in fish frying, but we have no reason to believe otherwise. One employer has reported that an existing member of staff upon taking up an Apprenticeship admitted that they had been looking elsewhere for employment as they "*wanted to do something more with their life and get a qualification*". How many valuable members of staff have been lost by businesses this year because they didn't offer "something more"?

**Raise Standards:** It is no coincidence that many of the fish friers involved in Apprenticeships are award winning and quality holding businesses. These types of businesses recognise the benefits of higher standards, and so they can easily recognise the benefits that an Apprenticeship can bring to their business. Having an Apprentice and working with an Apprenticeship Provider can provide a valuable opportunity for a small business to improve their policies and procedures.

**Grow Your Own Experts:** Many of our Apprentices are using a work based project to achieve part of the Apprenticeship. Projects on customer perceptions, waste and energy audits, supplier standards etc not only help the Apprentice to learn more about the business, it also helps the owner learn more about their business. The results of these in-house studies can provide major benefits to businesses in the form of improved efficiency, reduced costs and better customer experiences.

**Spinoffs:** It is easy to see the benefits of apprenticeships for the Apprentice, but what about the other members of staff? Apprenticeships can be taken up by existing employees as well as new entrants. And if a business is bringing in expertise from the Apprenticeship Provider, spending more effort on staff training and improving policies and procedures then there's an opportunity to spread some of these benefits

amongst the rest of the workforce. Everyone in the business can benefit from the Apprenticeship activity to a greater or lesser degree so talk to your Apprenticeship Provider about the *Spinoffs*.

In conclusion, Apprenticeships can improve business competitiveness and bring real world benefits to everyone in your business if you have the right approach and the right Provider.