

New Pneumatic Technology Opens up Exciting Opportunities at Riverside College



CoVE Partners, members of Riverside College and Famic Representatives at Riverside College (Halton) viewing the brand new equipment.

Riverside College is the new owner of a five axis robotic arm, a portable pneumatic training rig and a MAS200 (pictured left.) This equipment demonstrates some of the latest technology which helps bring all aspects of the manufacturing environment and the learning environment closer together. It was supplied by SMC Pneumatics, a world leader in innovation and the sales of pneumatic and electro pneumatic components for industrial automation. The MAS200 is a manufacturing production line that can be programmed to do a variety of tasks. These include: operator training, fault finding, supervisor systems, BIT Training and much more. This new state of the art equipment enables students to learn and employees to be up skilled in

automotive and manufacturing techniques. Phil Cooke Training and Development Manager at the College states "The purchase and installation of this innovative equipment, using funding obtained through the Automotive Northwest Cove, presents an exciting opportunity for Riverside College, and it's partners, to further meet the needs of the business community by enabling us to provide training, from foundation level to level 3, in Pneumatics, PLC, Programming, Robotics, Flow Process and Fault finding." If you would like to view this equipment or for further information contact: Phil Cooke, Training and Development Manager Riverside College on 0151 257 2087.

PfL's Spitting Image Robot Shows Engineering Can Be Fun

Partnership for Learning is temporary home to Sid a life like Robot, whose face has been made by the creators of Spitting Image. Sid has been lent to the training organisation by SMC Pneumatics which is a world leader in innovation and the sales of pneumatic and electro pneumatic components for industrial automation. SMC pneumatics has a training arm which designs equipment to help companies and training providers develop staff in all aspects of manufacturing technologies. Sid who stands at a mere 8ft lives off compressed air and electricity and can perform a variety of tasks from the waste up. Martin Bevan from SMC Pneumatics says "Sid is made using industrial pneumatic components, which are powered by a PLC



System. He is used as learning tool and to spread the message that Engineering isn't dirty, its fun!" Sid helped out at PfL's fund raising 'Festive Friday' on the tombola stall!

West Cheshire College Achieves Employer Focused Quality Mark

West Cheshire College is amongst the first 22 colleges in the UK to be recognised for excellence by the LSC under the New Standard for employer responsiveness and Vocational Excellence. The New Standard is a voluntary accreditation which highlights excellence in the two areas. These are: provider responsiveness to employer needs, and provider excellence in a particular vocational area. The College had to go through a stringent and detailed examination to obtain this accreditation which aims to increase the quality of training provisions. Alan Tate from West Cheshire was delighted with the result. He believes this to be "an excellent validation of the culture we have built at

West Cheshire College for full engagement with our business customers." The College was also awarded Part B accreditation for its work in the Engineering sector. "Having obtained a positive result gives us a massive vote of confidence and allows our partners in business to trust that the programme we deliver will match the desired outcomes they identify." says Alan Tate. Jane Smith Head of Technology at the College, went on to say "We are looking forward to building on these achievements by working in partnership with employers and the Automotive Manufacturing CoVE to develop the skills that are needed to help and protect the region's competitiveness."

Perrite Staff Benefit from Total People Partnership

Perrite Ltd an engineering company specialising in thermoplastic compounding technology has recently reaped the benefits of working along side Total People on a work based learning training scheme. Before the training Steve Honour, Manufacturing and Engineering Manager at Perrite, recognised that the company was suffering from high staff turnover and low staff morale, which lead to poor quality manufacturing. "I knew that if staff felt that we were investing in them, they would feel more valued, leading to a more contented, workforce," says Steve. "Total People allocated us a dedicated Training

Adviser, whose role is to sign up learners to the programme and support them throughout the process. Perrite has noticed a tangible improved staff retention and motivation since working with Total People. "There have been clear benefits to both the company and the individuals," says Steve. "Not only do the qualifications give us a competitive advantage, proving to customers that we invest in our staff and have a competent workforce, they allow our staff to prove their capabilities. The next step is to build upon this improved culture and continue to reap the rewards of work-based learning".

St Helens College Leads Consortium to Develop New Engineering Diploma



Students in the Motor Vehicle work shop at St Helens College

St Helens College has joined together with other learning providers in Merseyside to develop a new Engineering Diploma programme for 14 to 19 year olds.

The Diploma is to be launched in September 2008 at a new £3.8 million Vocational Skills Centre. The qualification will be offered to a small group at two levels; 15 students on the Higher Diploma (Level 2) and 15 students on the Advanced Diploma (Level 3). Consortium Jon Mitchell from the College states; "this programme will be an entirely new experience to learning via an applied rather than a vocational route. It will give young people a fully rounded education, which combines theoretical and practical learning." This is an exciting opportunity and hopefully leads to improved opportunities for school leavers in the Northwest.

Automotive North West is a partnership of Further Education Colleges and training providers. With support from the Learning and Skills Council we have formed a Centre of Vocational Excellence for automotive manufacturing. The partners are:

- Blackpool and The Fylde College
- Partnership for Learning (PFL)
- Riverside College, Halton
- St Helens College
- Total People Ltd
- West Cheshire College
- Preston College (Associate Partner)

New Improved Website!

We are pleased to announce that our new improved website is up and running. It now has more in-depth course information, up to date news, updates and event information, as well as testimonials from employers on services they have received and great links to our partners websites. Go to www.automotiveNW.co.uk and take a look.

Blackpool and The Fylde College Team up with Leyland Trucks to Tackle the Shortfall of Professional Engineers.



Jason Mistry (left) and Paul Sussams, both on the Trainee Design Engineer Programme.

Blackpool and The Fylde College has teamed up with market leaders, Leyland Trucks, to tackle the country's shortage of professional engineers. Lyn Butler, Human Resources Development Manager of Leyland Trucks says; "Fewer school-leavers are taking-up engineering and there has been an increase in the number of highly-qualified employees reaching retirement age." This she explains could result in a shortfall of professional engineers. The solution lies in forging partnerships with local education providers including Blackpool and The Fylde College. This has led to the development of two imaginative new learning programs, aimed at employers, designed to build on the latent talent within the company's 1,200 strong workforce. With this leading to workers gaining nationally-recognised professional qualifications. In turn, Leyland Trucks is provided with the high level of engineering knowledge and experience on which its future growth can be built. "We have numerous people within our workforce who have the ability and the commitment to gain

and improve their career prospects through further study," says Lyn Butler.

The first learning programme is a two year Trainee Design Engineering Programme. Thirty employees from all areas of the business applied to take part; five were successful, with another two to join them shortly. Each is now learning the fundamentals of engineering design and development through both on and off the job training. On successful completion each will have a job as a design engineer as well as gaining a further qualification potentially leading to a Bachelor of Engineering degree.

The second learning programme at Blackpool and The Fylde College is the new Foundation Degree in Automotive Manufacturing. Which has been established and accredited by Lancaster University. It is the equivalent to an HND and can take the place of the first two years of a BEng degree. Fourteen employees have signed-up for the course and will undertake three years of part-time study. Leyland Trucks Managing Director, Jim Sumner, says that well-qualified professional engineers are the lifeblood of the business. "We need people who understand engineering and have the high-level skills that are necessary to enable our company to remain world-competitive. Where better to find these engineers than amongst our own people, who have shown a commitment to increasing their knowledge and learning? I'm delighted that we've been able to work closely with local colleges to develop courses that meet our business needs and help our employees advance themselves and improve their lives."

Adrian Bamber, Curriculum Manager within the School of Engineering at Blackpool and The Fylde College, said: "This Foundation Degree was developed and validated with extensive input from Leyland's senior team, providing the industry with a relevant and exciting programme that can be utilised by other automotive manufacturers in the North West. This programme is a real testament to the ethos of Foundation Degree development. Colleges working in true partnership with industry leaders."



Automotive NW is proud to be the Further Education and Work Based Learning lead provider for NSAM in the North West.

www.nsa-m.co.uk

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PDS Engineering Show Promising Results thanks to BIT Training with Preston College



Annette Getty (PDS) and Steve Hughes, BIT Trainer, (Preston College)

P D S Engineering based in Nelson is one of the UK's leading specialists in high precision detail machining of components and prototypes. They have made parts ranging from Hot Air Balloon components for Sir Richard Branson, to wheel components for the Thrust SSC, which holds the world land speed record at an amazing 766Mph. In March 2007 P D S saw value in starting a Business Improvement Techniques Training Programme (BIT) with Preston College. The aim of BIT is to minimize waste,



increase company profitability, and drive employee development. Through relations with the Northwest Aerospace Alliance and Automotive Northwest and utilizing funding from ESF, P D S has moved its business forward and wont be looking back. Annette Getty states "The main impact of the BIT training has been the creation of a lean culture where all employees have pulled together to create a more productive and organised environment." The business has seen immediate benefits and increased productivity from the training. For example there has

been reduced tool retrieval time, and increased motivation of staff throughout the factory. P D S is constantly working on different projects so they had previously believed BIT might not have been sustainable due to P D S's need for a flexible environment. However the BIT Training was flexible enough to deliver customized training that catered to these needs, and adapted with P D S to create a sustainable environment. P D S was extremely pleased with the learning material provided by NSAM and is willing to recommend it to other employers.