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# The business benefits of vocational qualifications

## Honda



**Famous for its innovative products, Honda, have realised the benefits of vocational training for their staff and external dealerships. Since starting the programme in April 2001, nearly 950 apprentices have been through the technical training programme. The increased flexibility of the new-style qualifications has allowed Honda to tailor their programmes to fit around business needs exactly.**

Honda specifically provides technical and parts training programmes in their different product areas of car, motorcycle, and power equipment business's. They have apprentices currently working in all these areas within Honda dealerships around the country.

The move to the Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF) will make it easier for employers to ensure their vocational training programmes fit around their business needs. Paul Taylor, Technical Training Manager said: "The move to the new-style, QCF, qualifications will be absolutely great for us. It will mean that we can shape our programmes more effectively. One size does not fit all when it comes to vocational qualifications, this is a very welcome, long-overdue change."

A crucial part of Honda's Apprenticeship programme is to ensure the network is prepared for the new models coming out each year, meaning they have to plan four to six months ahead alongside business as usual service and training.

Using vocational qualifications has benefited Honda at every level of the business. Paul said: "To make Apprenticeships and vocational qualifications work, being able to shape the programmes you have on offer to meet business needs, is essential. The move to the QCF will help make that happen." The credits-based system will allowed Honda to move and select certain modules in the apprentice programme, to make sure the new apprentices are commercially viable from the start.

Paul added: "On-the-job training works really well for our industry, business and learners. A large part of my job is about educating our partners about the benefits of taking on apprentices. In their first year a Honda Apprentice is 25% effective, 50% in their second and 75% in their third. All in all, an Apprentice can be excellent value for money and value to their business ."

Honda have seen an improvement in retention rates: over 88% of those who start Apprenticeships finish them, demonstrating what a powerful lure the right training can be.

"To survive in the future, you have to employ young people and train them well. It is essential for any business to keep looking forward and seek out new blood. The increased flexibility in the new qualifications helps to make this happen."



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