

Birmingham International Airport

Birmingham International Airport was established in 1939 and has grown extensively since then. It now employs a range of people from office staff, including finance and HR, to firemen and security staff.

Essential skills training was first initiated in July 2005 when it was identified through incident reports that there was an obvious poor standard of literacy skills. The airport knew that this skills gap needed to be addressed, and learners met for the first time in September 2005. The first employees to undergo training were self selected. Following this, the airport was able to see the value and benefits of offering essential skills training to their staff. The decision was then made to introduce psychometric tests at the recruitment stage, in order to identify skill gaps which would allow the development of those skills.

Basic English and Maths was embedded into the airport's IT training courses which were delivered on site by the local college. The college aimed to deliver learning in a flexible way to fit requirements of the learners. The training environment is informal, helping to create a relaxing atmosphere for the employees to gain most benefit from the learning offered. Training could be delivered in small groups in the on site training rooms, or in the case of the Birmingham Airport Fire Officers, in the common room where laptops are provided by the college.

Birmingham International Airport is offering training to a range of staff working in different areas of the airport. A decision was taken on which would be the most suitable format for marketing and promoting the learning opportunities. The airport found promoting through emails, posters at staff bus stops and car parks, in common rooms and eating areas, meant that it would reach all employees no matter their role or working patterns.

Birmingham International Airport is at the initial stages of offering essential skills training to their staff. However, the organisation has already noticed the impact of learning:

- 67% of employees agreed that they feel more positive about their employer
- Staff feel more loyal to the company and its needs
- Learners agreed that the essential skills courses have not only enabled them to do their current job better, but has encouraged them to undertake further training due to the possibility of promotion in the future.
- For the business, the reduction in staff turnover, an increase in people taking up the opportunity of development and promotion from within the organisation are just some of the impacts expected.

The training of their employees has been a positive and worthwhile investment for Birmingham International Airport.

'It's about the culture of the business', Training and Development Manager, Birmingham International Airport.