

19th June 2012

Tillery Valley invests in staff skills programme

Award-winning Abertillery food producer Tillery Valley is investing in staff development and training and has introduced a brand new staff education programme. The range of courses and qualifications on offer are designed to give employees across all departments the opportunity to improve their skills and gain industry recognised qualifications.

Tillery Valley employs around 350 staff at its production facility in Abertillery, Gwent, and is the largest local employer after the local Council. By gaining qualifications within the workplace staff can enhance their CV's and potentially increase their chance of promotion.

The staged skills improvement programme began in January with an ESOL course for employees who speak English as a second or another language. The 34-week programme was run by Babcock tutors and completed onsite by around 9 employees. Successful completion of the course and assessment will lead to a Level One qualification in "ESOL at Work".

Tomasz Okonski is one of the members of staff who joined the ESOL course, which takes place at the Tillery Valley site once a week. He joined the course in order to improve his spoken and written English, to feel more confident in the workplace and hopefully be able to progress his career within the company. Tomasz said: "I really look forward to attending the two hour language sessions each week. I feel I am making progress and am more confident in speaking English at work and socially."

Tillery Valley has since introduced a range of NVQ programmes, delivered by Network Training. Approximately 50 staff enrolled on the four Level 2 programmes, covering Food Industry, Business and Administration, Warehousing and Cleaning and Support. It is expected that these will be completed within the next 12 to 18 months, with the opportunity to subsequently progress to an NVQ Level 3 qualification.

Rebecca Gwilliam, HR Manager at Tillery Valley, said:

“98% of our employees have a level 2 or above food safety qualification. Our aim is to have at least 95% of the workforce qualified to this level at all times. Tillery Valley has previously run Food Management skills courses for young people in the area as part of a scheme with the Prince’s Trust, and we are delighted to now be expanding our own development programme to offer wider opportunities to our own staff.

Introducing this range of courses marks our commitment to investing in our employees, and it has been really encouraging to see the amount of staff members taking the opportunity to develop their skills. Gaining new skills and qualifications is advantageous to both individuals and the wider business. We hope that successfully completing these courses will be a real boost to staff members’ confidence in their abilities and Tillery Valley in turn will reap the benefits of a well trained, professional workforce.

We will continually assess the areas we need to focus on from a training point of view and hope to expand the courses we have on offer over the next year.”