

NEWS & VIEWS

MARCH 2017



training | development | competence

IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY



THE BRILLIANCE OF BLENDED LEARNING...

In January 2015, we launched our online and blended learning portal PLUS enabling us to provide online, cost effective, high quality training.

PLUS enables us to support those who prefer to learn online and allows us to extend the learning process through a combination of training workshops and online learning.

We have a range of online and blended learning training options available including Leadership & Management Development, Assessor, Internal Verifier and Training & Coaching Skills. For more information, please get in touch.

“

I really liked the progress bar. It is a good visual aid to see my course progress. And I found that this motivated me as well.

A learner on PLUS.

”

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FEATURES...



**GRADUATION
IN MORAY 5**



**NETWORKING
IN ROTHES 11**



**CHOSEN
RECIPE 13**

Cott



CONGRATULATIONS LENNY DAVIDSON!

Lenny Davidson, Production Supervisor at Cott Beverages, has successfully completed his Modern Apprenticeship in Food and Drink Operations at SVQ Level 3. Lenny is the first employee working with Cott Beverages to have achieved this level.

Lenny has worked at Cott Beverages for 18 years. And commenting on his experience, Lenny said “The qualification has helped me gain the knowledge and skills to do my job role with more confidence within the company. I felt the course was delivered at a speed that suited me perfectly.”

“

“We have supported 11 candidates from across Production, Quality and Warehousing to work towards their qualifications.”

The Modern Apprenticeship system is now being used on site to support the harmonised working conditions. They have also been written-in to the revised job descriptions which are used to provide a career map through the roles available on site.

Everyone on site has developed from this programme and a healthy debate has resulted in an increased level of professionalism from everyone at the factory.

Brian Watts, Operational Manager at Cott Beverages.

”



CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS RECIPE BOOK FOR CHARITY...

In 2016, we celebrated our twentieth year in business working in the field of training, development and competence.

For the last twenty years, the team at Polaris Learning Ltd has been working with a wide range of companies from the food and drink, and the energy industries.

This year we wanted to do something that would mark our twentieth year and would also involve our local community. We decided on a recipe book with all proceeds going to a local charity.

Our chosen charity, The Pitscurry Project, are a garden and café attraction in rural Aberdeenshire that is run by Aberdeenshire Council with funding for major projects provided by the Pitcaple Environmental Project (PEP) charity. The Pitscurry site is a community gardening project that provides new opportunities and work experience for adults with disabilities in the Garioch area of Aberdeenshire.

Work that is carried out on the site is based on organic principles and the project is committed to the production and use of renewable energy.

The Pitscurry Project represent so much of what we believe in as a company: giving people the opportunity to be the best they can through learning, development and support. It is the work of this charity and our work with our food and drink clients that gave us the idea of a recipe book.

With thanks to our clients, our team at Polaris Learning Ltd and of course, The Pitscurry Project, we have a recipe book packed with new recipe ideas. The recipe book is packed with recipes from familiar brand names such as Baxters, Deans of Huntly, Macsween and The Bay Fish & Chips Shop. And you won't find these recipes anywhere else.

Copies are available to buy for £7.50 each (and postage) with all proceeds going towards the Pitscurry Project. If you would like to purchase a copy, please get in touch with us.



Passionate about training...

There has been tasty training happening at Macsween of Edinburgh across the board!

Recently, team leaders at Macsween successfully completed a leadership development programme in conjunction with Polaris Learning to gain their ILM Leadership & Management Essentials Endorsed Award. They covered all areas of the business from yard and despatch team leaders, production team leaders and members of the technical team.

Carrying out three intense days of training workshops and using our online and blended learning system PLUS to complete their assignments, all learners successfully complete their qualifications.

Facilitating a half day team dynamics workshop

We asked them to look at high performing teams and their attributes before scoring their own teams and looking at areas of not just development but where they excelled and could bring some of that practices into other areas.

Learners completed Belbin questionnaires and looked at their own strengths and weaknesses as team members as well as how their own senior team fitted together. We also looked at why communication matters and the importance of emotional intelligence and body language. It was an active morning with lots of ideas being shared and we had valuable input from their team.



During the training workshops, they also welcomed a member of the senior production team at Paterson Arran where the sharing of business processes and experiences proved to be invaluable.

It didn't stop there for the team leaders! As all of the successful learners have now completed their Level 3 Modern Apprenticeships in Food and Drink Operations. It has also been a successful period for learners completing their Level 2 Modern Apprenticeships who hope to complete in the coming weeks.

Moving forward into 2017, line leaders at Macsween will also complete the leadership development programme. They will have two days of training on communication, leadership and motivation, conflict management and workplace coaching.

The training team at Macsween have already indicated their interest in Modern Apprenticeship places for 2017/18 and we also look forward to delivering an in-house Train the Trainer course later in the year.

Working with Polaris Learning has proven highly successful in ensuring we have strong leadership throughout our business. The increase in key skills within our teams has shown tangible benefits during an exceptionally busy year for the Company. Their trainers have an excellent understanding of our business needs, and tailor their training to ensure maximum results that can be transferred back to the workplace. Highly recommend for any business who wants results from their investment in learning and development.

Fiona Robb, Training Supervisor at Macsween of Edinburgh.

It has been a busy and exciting time at Baxters Food Group. With many learning and development initiatives all running at the same time it has been a hive of activity.

Talent for the Future Programme

The biggest celebration was the graduation ceremony of the award winning 'Talent for the Future' programme where twelve candidates successfully completed their ILM Leadership & Management Essentials Endorsed Award combined with a Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship in Food and Drink Operations. The programme involved many in-house assessments as well as written assignments and group 'leading change' projects which were presented in front of the UK Board at their graduation ceremony.

The programme has proved to be so successful for the organisation's Fochabers site in Moray, that they have now asked us to roll out a programme globally starting with Baxters North America in the near future.



ILM Level 3 Certificate in Leadership and Management

We are delighted that four of the graduates from the 'Talent for the Future' programme have also now progressed onto the full ILM Certificate in Leadership and Management at Level 3 which started in January. This year long programme will take their learning to the next level as potential managers and will cover everything from Leadership and Motivation, Costs and Budgets, and Quality Management through to Developing Themselves as Effective Team Members. We are very excited to be working with them and to see them grow as individuals.

Behavioural Values and Business Principles

Working in conjunction with Polaris Learning, employees at Baxters Food Group attended facilitated focus groups on their Behavioural Values and Business Principles. Working with their Group Communications Manager, we developed facilitation workshops and guidelines for the focus groups to be delivered globally within the group which are proving to be an excellent way of engaging staff in shaping the future. This was covered at all staff levels, from factory floor to leadership roles.



Other Initiatives

Other Baxters Food Group initiatives include their 'Recipe for Success' programme. This programme will consist of bite sized training workshops designed to provide support to those who are responsible for employees, from new managers to board level. These workshops will take place throughout 2017 and will align to Baxters Behavioural Values and Business Principles.

Alongside the above initiative we are also developing and delivering Food Manufacturing Excellence (FME) workshops and training at Level 2 for their "Super Operators". This training covers topics such as food safety standards and compliance, problem diagnosis and continuous improvement.

Look out for our next issue to see how they are progressing!



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

ILM ENDORSED AWARDS

Our endorsed awards are designed to meet the needs of supervisors and managers who need to develop their leadership and management knowledge and skills, and who would benefit from more practical workplace assignments than is possible with the ILM qualifications.

This means that although we include theory in the training, we can focus much more on how the supervisors and managers can apply their knowledge to their roles at work. We do this by focusing the assignments on the roles of individuals at work, making it easier for them to transfer their learning back to the workplace.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS:

This award is aimed at supervisors and team leaders who are new to a leadership role or have been working in a team leader role and want to build their skills and knowledge.

Course Overview

The training for this award is available as workshops, online via our learning portal PLUS or through blended learning.

We cover six topics chosen from Communication Skills, Leadership and Motivation Skills, Coaching Skills, Planning and Allocating Work, Conflict Management, Leading Change and Appraisals/Performance Management.

We use a mix of tools to make this an interactive and engaging qualification that gives supervisors the skills, knowledge and confidence to succeed from the start.

Learners can complete learning only or, in addition to the workshops, undertake work based assignments to achieve this ILM Endorsed Award.

Learners are supported by a Polaris Learning consultant during this important stage of the learning process and we provide detailed feedback on their assignments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE:

The award is aimed at middle to senior managers who already have basic leadership skills and experience and want to further develop their ability to get the best out of their teams. We focus on the knowledge and themes that are essential for managers to succeed at this level.

Course Overview

Training for this award is available as workshops, or through open programmes.

The topics we cover are Management Communication, Leadership and Team Dynamics, Motivating Your People, and Setting Priorities and Delegation.

Following completion of the workshops, learners can complete a small number of practical assignments which have been designed to bridge the gap between their formal learning and what they do back in their workplace.

During this important stage of the learning process learners are supported by a Polaris Learning consultant. We also provide detailed feedback on their assignments.

Our Leadership and Management Development training and qualification options are available via a range of delivery methods so whether you have one person or hundreds to train, we can help.

Please get in touch for more information.



ASSESSOR

Your assessors need to be trained on your assessment process if you want them to be able to apply this effectively back in their workplace.

We can ensure your assessors understand what the company needs in order to achieve its objectives and where their role fits in with this process. This helps create assessors who are better able to assess and who are more committed to the task, leading to an increase in the number of assessments completed to the required standard.

We offer three main options relating to assessor training and certification:

- **SQA L&D9D/9DI Assessor Qualification**
- **Training with a Knowledge Assignment**
- **Training with a Practical Assessment (Certificate of Competence)**



INTERNAL VERIFIER

Internal verification is an important part of your competency management system. It is a process that you put in place to ensure that all your assessors are assessing in the same way and to the same standard.

Your internal verifiers will need to know what is expected of them by your organisation as well as understanding what is involved in internal verification.

We can help you with introductory training for your internal verifiers through to full qualifications.

The three main options relating to internal verifier training and certification available:

- **SQA L&D11 Verifier Qualification**
- **Training with a Knowledge Assignment**
- **Training with a Practical Assessment (Certificate of Competence)**



TRAINING THE TRAINERS

Our training courses focus solely on the development of practical training skills.

Whether your employees are new to training or are experienced trainers who want to refresh or update their skills and knowledge, we can help. We also find that training specialists or supervisors who need to deliver training as part of their job role can benefit.

We can offer short intensive training courses leading to recognised qualifications such as our ILM Train the Trainer Endorsed Award as well as vocational units from the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and full SQA Learning and Development Awards at Level 3 and Level 4.

You may also find our short introduction videos on our website beneficial. In these videos, we talk about presentation skills and group training as well as coaching and mentoring options available.

For more information on any of these services, please visit our website or feel free to get in touch.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

‘NO ONE IS THE SAME, BUT EVERYONE IS EQUAL’

What’s So Important About Having A Diverse Workplace?

Having a diverse workforce means that the organisation can offer a wide range of ideas, skills, resources and energies to the business to give it a competitive edge. There is a much wider pool of talent available to the organisations which embrace diversity, and they will reap the benefits of a broader market, improved productivity and a raised profile within the community.

Some of the key benefits of diversity management include things such as a better understanding of market segments and consumer behaviour, and you soon become an employer of choice.

Some of these benefits to employees include a better appreciation, understanding and respect for difference, improved employee morale, improved motivation and better retention of employees.

Equal Opportunities

What does it really mean to ensure that all employees are treated equally and have the same access to promotion and progression within an organisation?

Most commonly, the term ‘equal opportunity’ is a term used within human resources to describe the actions and measures taken to ensure fairness in employment and recruitment. In simple terms, equal opportunity is about addressing the ‘balance’ and representation of a community within a workforce.



CYBER ESSENTIALS

Cyber attacks can cost organisations thousands of pounds and cause lengthy periods of disruption.



Do you have a plan for what you would do if your customer database was stolen, your website was forced offline, or you couldn’t access your email or business-critical data?

Cyber criminals don’t just attack banks and large companies - they target any organisation which isn’t properly protected, even small businesses.

The majority of cyber attacks exploit basic weaknesses in your IT systems and software. Cyber Essentials shows you how to address those basics and helps you prevent the most common attacks. The scheme is designed by Government to make it easy for you to protect yourself.

Why should you think about Cyber Essentials?

Cyber Essentials helps prevent the vast majority of cyber attacks. Even a simple virus or piece of malware could result in loss of company and client data, disrupt your cashflow and take up staff time. An attack could also put off your customers, stop you trading, and damage your hard-earned reputation. It could also be reported in the local media. Loss of data could breach the Data Protection Act and lead to fines or prosecution.

For more information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-overview>

Cooke Aquaculture Scotland is a leading Scottish salmon aquaculture company with activities on the Shetland and Orkney islands as well as on the Scottish mainland.

It is a family-owned company, and was established in 1985. Over the years the company has expended its facilities, product lines and distribution network to become a fully-integrated corporation, with operations throughout the world.

At every point in the production sequence, from breeding to processing, in freshwater and seawater, they focus on delivering superior quality salmon for superior quality products.

Recently, an impressive 40 members of staff at the Orkney and Shetland processing plants achieved their Modern Apprenticeships in Fish and Shellfish Processing Skills.

Looking forward into 2017, Cooke Aquaculture and Polaris Learning have identified another group of employees to complete training, with the completion of Aquaculture Modern Apprenticeships on their farm sites.



TRAINING IN FULL FLOW AT A.P. JESS GROUP

For over 40 years the A.P. Jess Group has supplied meat products to customers far and wide.

The family owned business was established in 1976 and since then the company has evolved massively to be a highly integrated processing, manufacturing and distribution operation.

For the last 18 years, we have worked with A.P. Jess, McKechnie Jess and Charcuterie Continental to complete over 200 Modern Apprenticeships at both Level 2 and 3.

And we are excited to be continuing our work with McKechnie Jess in 2017 as we continue the Modern Apprenticeship programme, ensuring that all members of staff meets their requirements for compliance.

Steven Jolly, Operations Manager for both Charcuterie Continental and A.P. Jess, has also asked us to carry out hygiene refresher training at the Charcuterie site in 2017 to ensure everyone not only have current certificates but are also kept informed of any legislative changes relevant to their workplace. This follows on from the recent completion of internal audit courses across all of the sites in January 2017.

Steven continues to look for development opportunities for his team while the training programme is well supported by the broader management team.



Building on our strong relationship with Dawnfresh Seafoods, a partnership that has run since 2012, we recently completed a comprehensive Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship programme for the quality control team. Dawnfresh are keen to maintain their high standards of quality to their clients and continue to improve the service they offer.

This programme involved a great level of commitment from both Dawnfresh and the learners to achieve the qualification, with some candidates travelling over 100 miles to attend!

The candidates were required to attend several workshops covering areas such as maintaining quality standards, monitoring production progress, hygiene standards and reporting and recording.

During the past year we have also completed a further 20 Level 2 Modern Apprenticeship Qualifications across the Dawnfresh sites.

Dawnfresh are keen to give the operators an insight into the operating and decision making process of the management team.

So in the pipeline, we are looking to complete a Level 2 programme in Food Manufacturing Excellence (FME) at Dawnfresh, with 17 candidates attending a series of short training workshops.



INVESTING IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT PAYS OFF FOR FARNE SALMON



As part of the continuous training and development within the plant at Farne Salmon & Trout Ltd, 19 employees recently completed their Modern Apprenticeship Level 2 qualification with a further 4 employees in the process of completing their Level 3 qualification. This now brings the total number of employees at Farne who have completed the Modern Apprenticeship training programme since 2011 to 85.

The programme at Farne has included a variety of pathways such as Fish and Shellfish Processing Skills, Distribution Skills, Operational Skills and Production & Processing Skills.

Farne Salmon & Trout Ltd have also built on their successes by being announced winners of the Business Insider Training and Development Award 2016, Vibes Award Winners 2016 and the HR Team of the Year 2016 at the S1 Awards.

“The Level 2 and 3 Modern Apprenticeship programmes have given our employees a prime opportunity to expand their knowledge and to have their practical skills assessed to national recognised standards, which demonstrates our confidence in the ability of our staff at all levels. This will ensure that we will continue to deliver the quality and service that we are renowned for.”

Ros Hall, Training Manager at Farne Salmon & Trout Ltd.

GET INVOLVED

SCOTTISH APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2017

6-10 MARCH 17

#Scotappweek17

scottishapprenticeshipweek.com



NETWORKING



Recently, we were asked to attend a networking breakfast in Rothes on the request of Skills Development Scotland with two of our local Modern Apprentices.

Emma Reid and Sandy Young, both Level 3 candidates from local employer Baxters Food Group, came along to discuss apprenticeships with other businesses and how it could help their business and employees to develop and succeed.

The event, hosted By Roderick Innes of Skills Development Scotland was greatly received, with Emma and Sandy representing everything that the programme has to offer well.

Sandy also did a presentation, not an easy thing to do in front of some thirty strangers! He explained what he got from the programme and how it has helped with his confidence and personal development. The feedback received on the day was fantastic and everyone was impressed with both Sandy and Emma's input.

From a training providers perspective, it was also useful to chat to other employers and training providers to get different views on how the programme fits into their business model.

MA
Modern Apprenticeships

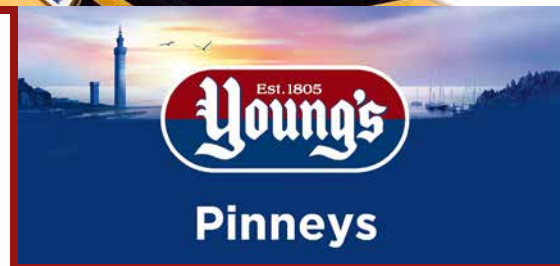
From Skills Development Scotland

LEADING THE INDUSTRY FROM QUALITY CONTROL TO TRAINING...



Modern Apprenticeships

Another very successful year for Young's Pinneys with their Modern Apprenticeship programmes at Level 2 and Level 3. With more than 23 employees successfully completed in 2016, and another 21 employees still in training it has been a busy time.



The workshop approach to the delivery of the Modern Apprenticeships at Level 3 has proved very successful. Following attendance at 6 training workshops, cross departmental appreciation increased leading to improved team work. Motivation and leadership skills have also increased across all of the teams.

Having completed the workshops, the participants also had a chance to showcase their skills and knowledge by pitching their ideas for continuous improvement to the senior team. For some, the idea of presenting to the senior team was nerve wracking, however the feedback was consistently positive and everyone deservedly left feeling a great sense of achievement.

ILM Train the Trainer

New training team members have also been put through their paces with an ILM Train the Trainer qualification. The participants joined us for an intensive practical training programme and were then joined by shift managers who wanted to enhance their coaching skills for coaching their own teams.



Demonstration and Instruction on Day 2 of the Train the Trainer workshop

SQA L&D9D Assessor

Three of the training team is now working with us to achieve their SQA L&D9D Assessor qualifications. They are doing this through a combination of blended learning using our online and blended learning system PLUS and a face to face half day standardisation workshop. Much of their training is completed online where they can complete their knowledge sections and upload their evidence for verification. This is a great way to allow candidates the freedom to complete coursework around their commitments on the factory floor and also have the benefit of online support with their assessor at a time to suit them.



STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING

AN OLD FAVOURITE, SERVE WITH CREAM, ICE CREAM OR BOTH!

INGREDIENTS:

2 oz soft butter
6 oz granulated sugar
8 oz flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 egg
6 oz stoned dates
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1 teaspoon vanilla essence

TOFFEE SAUCE

2 1/2 oz soft brown sugar
1 1/2 oz butter
2 tablespoons double cream

FAMILY RECIPE FROM LINDA BOOTH, OF POLARIS LEARNING.

METHOD

Pre-heat the oven to 180C.
Cream butter and sugar together.
Add half of the flour and baking powder.
Beat in the egg with the rest of the flour.
Continue to beat for a further minute.
Pour boiling water over the dates and mix in bicarbonate of soda and vanilla essence.
Add this mixture to the sponge mixture.
Put into a greased baking tray and bake for 40 minutes in a moderate oven.
Heat the brown sugar and butter until melted.
Add cream and simmer for 3 minutes.
Pour over hot pudding and serve with ice cream or double cream.



MEET THE CONSULTANT

In this edition we speak to Senior Consultant at Polaris Learning, Alastair Dickie, to give our readers an insight into his background and role...



What is your background?

My background was originally retail. My family owned three butchers shops which were run by my father initially and then from the mid-eighties, when I bought my father out, I began running the business dealing with all the issues that running a modern business entails.

I then decided to attend Salford University for a year to gain my Meat Inspection tickets and began working in Abattoirs for the Meat Hygiene Service, a subsidiary of the Food Standards Agency, carrying out carcass inspections to ensure they were fit for human consumption.

Down the line, I fancied a role change and spotted an advert for a training position with what is now, Polaris Learning.

How long have you been in the job?

I have never really looked back, since then I have done a lot of self development and gathered a lot of experience in my 13 years with Polaris Learning and have the advantage of working with a very varied range of people from lots of different industries.

What do you love about the job?

I love how varied the work is. Every day is different and I am constantly learning from the candidates I work with.

I get to meet some brilliant people and while we are serious about delivering the training to the highest standard we can there is always time for a laugh.

What makes you passionate about training?

I pride myself in delivering training in a way that is relaxed and interactive. I feel both the clients and the candidates get more from the training if they feel they are involved and not just being lectured to all the time.

Most of my experience is in the Food & Drink Industry, and whether it's production or management, I work with most levels of people and am very lucky that I can learn from them, whether it is in a workshop environment or in the production halls. Their knowledge far exceeds mine! I'm just a vehicle that can pass it on to others.

We recently ran a three day "Train the Trainer" course in the Scottish Borders for a fish processing client and the candidates had to do a presentation to us on any topic they are interested in. One candidate did a practical demonstration on how to make toffee cup cakes and excellent they were too...

I would also like to add that we have a great support team in our office who are really patient with me as administration has never been my strong point and they are really good at prompting me when things need done for them and just keep me right in general.

Favourite training quote?

"If you can't explain it simply you don't understand it well enough"

POLARIS LEARNING JOIN FORCES WITH AQUATERRA TRAINING

We are delighted to be working with AquaTerra Training to offer an enhanced range of training services to our food and drink clients.

Established in 2008, AquaTerra currently delivers a range of accredited, practical courses covering: work at height, confined space, rigging and lifting, transport of dangerous goods and health and safety to an average of 8,000 candidates per year.

Both companies share a similar ethos, a drive for continuous improvement and a focus on high standards. Our range of services is complimentary and by working together we believe we can offer you a fuller range of training solutions.

AquaTerra can provide training at their excellent, purpose built training centre in Aberdeenshire or they can provide a trainer to your site.



AquaTerra

Training

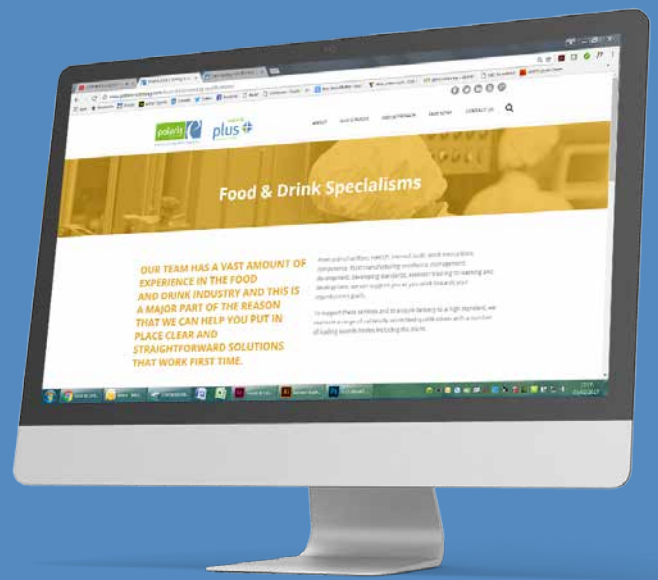


- Work at Height
- Confined Space
- Driver CPC, ADR & Dangerous Goods
- Rigging & Lifting
- Health & Safety

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