

Case Study 1:

Fast Track Apprenticeship Program Success Story

Fredo's Meats, Port Macquarie NSW

Fredo's Meats and Giant General Store NSW, have taken competency based training and fast tracking of their apprentices to the next level.

A strong trading business that has a thriving retail butchery in-store, this has been a family-owned business for the past 26 years that supplies both retail and wholesale product for market.

Employing over 20 staff, succession planning is critical for Company Director Mr. Guy Williams, which is why he says that the business has had up to six apprentices working within the environment – and currently employs four.

With a structure that has this many staff, Mr. Williams estimates that he has almost two staff on annual leave at any one time, so it is critical for his business that anyone within his meat team is up to speed and can rotate into as many jobs and be efficient as possible.

Through an active training program in conjunction with Hunter TAFE and teacher Ian Gibson, Mr. Williams has opted for an all-on-the-job training model. "Through our partnership with Ian and Hunter TAFE, our apprentices need to fulfill the training qualification requirements, and we take the time to work through each task from bottom to top."

"The on-the-job training that Hunter provides is fantastic," says Mr. Williams. "It gives me access to my apprentices all year round, and when the meat trainers do come into the shop, there is no interference into the normal workings and tasks being performed by my other staff. For me it is a win-win situation, and my boys are getting the top training they deserve."

When asked why he continues to employ apprentices, he replied "I need trades people that not only suit my type of butchery, but also our needs. My business demands top butchers that can supply expert customer service. If we stop employing apprentices we will not have enough butchers, and I feel that I have a responsibility (and while I am in a position to be able) to continue our trade."

Mr. Williams promotes fast tracking of apprenticeships within the business and rewards his apprentices for their hard work and knowledge. "If any of my apprentices can perform all tasks that are expected of them within a shorter timeframe than their training contract, then why should I hold them back? Fast tracking them has its positives for my business; it gives us qualified butchers quicker, we regularly rotate staff around the shop, and staff morale is excellent. BUT, they have to be competent."

Whilst not putting potential apprentices through a formal interview, Fredo's meats looks for new meat employees that are willing to start at the bottom and work their way up through the ranks – at their pace. This has to be, and in Mr. Williams words "A win-win situation for all."

Case Study 2: Fast Track Apprenticeship Program – Success Story

Rathmines Butchery, Rathmines NSW

Partners of Rathmines Butchery NSW, Stephen and Jason Smith, are father and son who operate a business that believes in fast tracking their apprentices through their apprenticeship.

Managing a business employing six staff, the importance of continual and current training is an integral and critical component of the business.

Jason, who until recently was employed as a trainer/assessor with Hamilton TAFE within the meat industry, stresses that competency based training is the only method that will be implemented within their workplace.

Having had two apprentices already complete their apprenticeship early, and with the employment of their current apprentice Ben Houlison (for the past six months), Jason suggests that “ongoing training and development of all staff is critical to keep them current with any new OHS, hygiene and sanitation rules and regulations. Our shop is of high standard in all aspects and it is imperative that we train staff to have the underpinning knowledge of all rules and regulations.”

When asked to give his interpretation of competency based training, Jason said, “Competency based completion allows more motivated apprentices to move forward at a quicker than normal timeframe. In regards to Ben, he is driven and motivated towards completing his apprenticeship to a high standard. Ben utilises his own personal time to learn theory and completes his work at a much faster rate than normal. Ben is dedicated to completing his practical skills, this means he will be able to complete his apprenticeship and be more valuable to the shop in a shorter time.”

“As business owners, we believe that if you take the extra time to extend your training methods to incorporate that little bit extra, then you can train your apprentice to the standards that your business expects. And the staff you do train become a reflection on you, your work practices and your business.”

“Our business will continue to employ apprentices and fast track them through their apprenticeship so as to take the workload off other butchers and from my personal point of view it’s beneficial to bring new blood into the meat industry. By employing the younger generation from the start of their apprenticeship, you are able to mould and develop them into the butcher that you and your business require,” continued Jason.

Rathmines Butchery believes that from competency based completion and fast tracking of their apprentices, numerous benefits will flow. The shop will benefit from an increase in quality of product across all trading patterns. It's also a motivation to the apprentice, as completing their apprenticeship in a reduced timeframe leads to an increase in wages earlier, and encourages them to take on added responsibility.

It is critical to employ the right people and Stephen and Jason look for particular traits in prospective employees. This includes applicants displaying high levels of presentation and good personal hygiene and who are well spoken and demonstrate a good attitude.

Training is provided and supported by Hamilton TAFE trainers and assessors, and the model of delivery that suits their needs is total on-the-job delivery, as their shop has all the required facilities for the current training package – including corning, smoking and a full range of value added equipment and products.

Jason explained, “The teachers at Hamilton TAFE are extremely helpful and they provide information and assistance when requested. They are always courteous and flexible with their visits when it comes to the time that they attend our shop for assessing. I know if there was additional training required for Ben to complete units they would provide assistance without any hesitation – this is critical for any early completion which I fully support.”



Jason Smith (l) with Ben Houlison who has just entered his 2nd year as an apprentice

