

Case Study 1: Fast Track Apprenticeship Program – Success Story

Shaw's Meats, Gympie Queensland

The faces may have changed over the past ten years, and ownership of the business passed from father to son, but Len and Bev Shaw of Shaw's Meats, located in a thriving regional shopping complex in Gympie Queensland, definitely have their finger on the pulse when it comes to competency based training and fast-tracking their apprentice butchers.

Even within a business that employs up to 11 personnel at times, Len puts the success of his apprentices down to competency based training – “When they can do the job, I will teach them something else,” he said.

Len takes pride in the fact that past apprentices who have completed their apprenticeships more rapidly than the nominal timeframe (as set by the State Training Authority) are currently managing other shops in the North of the State.

Along with this, Len values the positive feedback he has received from respected business owners on his training methods and techniques that become apparent when they employ butchers that Shaw's Meats have trained. “I have had various calls, with some guys saying that it is a pleasure to employ a butcher that is a (complete) butcher. *Whatever you are doing Len, don't change it!*”

On average, Len's apprentices complete anywhere from 6-12 months early, supported by the model of training he has implemented.

Under the watchful eye of Symbio Alliance Meat Trainers Darren and Steve, Len takes valuable time himself to provide one-on-one training with his apprentices.

The model Len has chosen for the training of his young charges is all on-the-job interspersed with visits and assessments conducted by Symbio Alliance. Len sees these visits from the RTO as an important aspect of the training process, as his apprentices are exposed to different methods of performing tasks from guys that are living the job as well as the trainers.

However, he urged that as a manager you need to be prepared to put the time in to train the apprentices yourself. The apprenticeship is a three way contract between the Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the Apprentice and the business owner – who in Len's eyes has the major part to play.

Fast-tracking Shaw's apprentices has had numerous advantages as Len explained. “What our butchers and I know, the boys will be taught. Competency based to me

means that if they can perform a task, they will move on and I will teach them new skills or knowledge. This is critical to my business, as I expect that when I am not in the shop, things should run as if I was present.”

Len highlighted that due to the apprentices’ fast tracking, they do receive tradesman wages earlier, but the numerous other benefits far outweigh this.

“It is both pleasing and satisfying to see these guys grow and develop within the business and also take pride in the workplace and their own output. Yes, we pay them accordingly (as deserved), but it creates a great working environment when all my guys are putting in. Fast tracking also makes for a keener apprentice as they are the ones to make the progress if they put the work in. If they don’t, then they progress at the normal timeframe. It really is a win-win situation for all involved.”

Jonathon Heath, Len’s current first year apprentice (after working on/off through the summer holidays as a casual employee) has been employed full-time since January, but is currently performing tasks within the workplace far beyond this level.

And going by Shaw’s Meats previous history of producing high calibre butchers in a reduced time frame, Johnno will receive fast-tracking through his apprenticeship as well.



Jonathon Heath – 1st year apprentice with Len Shaw