

1. Case study 1: Small independent butcher Legana Gourmet Meats: on-the-job delivery

Legana Gourmet Butchery (Legana, Tasmania) employs very few staff. When they are looking to employ an apprentice, the position is typically filled by the person who worked at the shop after school (as wash-up person), or by the most suitable applicant who answered an advertisement in the local paper.

Under competency based-completion and flexible delivery and with the vast product range that is produced in-store, the apprenticeship is generally completed in the workplace with no off-the-job component. This methodology is available to all employers who can meet all the requirements of the training package within the workplace, and where their apprentice is able to be exposed to all units of competency required.

Recruitment

The recruitment in this case study was managed by the business owner.

Once a suitable apprentice was found the employer made contact with an Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC).

Commencement

The apprentice commenced work with the employer.

A representative from an AAC visited the employer and apprentice, signed them into an appropriate training contract (MTM30807 Cert III Meat Processing (Meat Retailing)) for the nominal term for an apprenticeship as stipulated by the State Training Authority of Tasmania – 48 months.

Sign-up

The RTO trainer/assessor from The Skills Institute made a workplace visit (after receiving notification from the AAC) to enrol the apprentice, and to negotiate the training plan.

This process determined the requirements of both the employer and the apprentice to contribute to the completion of training according to the training plan.

The apprentice undertook to learn the required skills from the employer and any relevant staff, and to complete the workbooks provided by the RTO.

The employer agreed to provide on-the-job training and to supervise the apprentice's skill acquisition according to the timeframes agreed in the training plan.

Training plan

The training plan outlined the units of competency required to be completed in the workplace.

It also outlined logical clustering of units and the expected timeframes in which competency should be achieved.

Workbooks and other training support materials such as DVDs

The learning materials utilised by the Skills Institute are structured to allow for flexible delivery of the training.

The workbooks are designed to provide the underpinning knowledge for each unit. The RTO worked with the student to identify their learning style and establish an effective mix of learning and practical tasks to reinforce that learning. Some of these learning strategies were revisited regularly to ensure they were effective. The employer was also involved as well, so that there was a clear understanding of the expectations of both the apprentice and the employer.

Completion

This model of delivery (on-the-job) for this apprentice is expected to enable qualification in less than three years. However, when used for other apprentices, the time required to complete the apprenticeship will vary, depending on the apprentice's motivation and language, literacy and numeracy levels, and the employer's level of support and time-commitment to workplace training.

Trainer and assessor

The workplace trainer and assessor for Legana Gourmet Meats is visiting the workplace as negotiated on the individual training plan, and their role is critical, including:

- the management and delivery of training and assessment in the workplace
- regular review of the training plan and progress, and adjustment of time frames as necessary
- coaching and supporting the employer to adequately train the apprentice whilst incorporating a competency-based approach
- mentoring and supporting the apprentice to ensure the apprentice remains on track, is motivated and supported throughout their apprenticeship.

(Based on a Case Study developed by DIIRD, Skills Victoria)

Case Study 2: Fast Track Apprenticeship Program Success Story

The following articles provide an insight into examples of how the Fast Track Apprenticeship program has been a positive success in meat retailing establishments.

Aussie Discount Meats, Glenorchy Tasmania

Running one, from a chain of four Butcher shops, Manageress Sharon Skinner knows the difficulty in attracting and keeping key personnel in the workplace.

Sharon, from Aussie Discount Meats in Hobart, Tasmania gave her thoughts on Fast Tracking apprentices (under a competency based completion system).

A unique business, Sharon wants the best people to surround her, and to deliver quality customer services and products as the customers have come to expect. Says Sharon "There are differing opinions from butcher to butcher, but I wanted a change from the old school views and ideas, which is why our store here employs a couple of apprentices at any time. Staff development is a critical aspect of a successful business."

Recently completed and now trade qualified butcher, Justin has taken on a more senior role within the workplace since completing his apprenticeship.

Explains Sharon:

"Why should I hold Justin back, or for that matter anyone? If they are capable of performing certain tasks and they can progress through their learning at an accelerated pace, who am I to stop them? Justin completed his apprenticeship in December - approximately twelve months early, so that means that our business now has an extra qualified butcher, one who has grown with the business. Don't get me wrong - he does not know it all and his learning will continue over years to come (like us all), but he is a butcher who, while still only young, has taken on board the extra responsibility that has been handed to him.

Yes he does cost me extra wages each week, but if we did not think him competent he would not have been Fast Tracked. For our business, and more importantly our people, the opportunity of fast tracking through an apprenticeship (if capable) is a welcome change to the whole system of employing an apprentice."

Sharon finished by saying, "To see Justin mature within the workplace and start to make some decisions, take an active role in training our second year apprentice Luke, and to become a senior member of the team has been fantastic. If Luke

shows the same promise (and he is progressing rapidly) then he will fast track through his apprenticeship as well."

Luke Dennison (l) a 2nd year apprentice with Justin Stewart who has completed his training



Case Study 3: Fast Track Apprenticeship Program Success Story

Sharmans Butchery, Wivenhoe, Tasmania

Plant a seed and watch it grow

This has definitely been the case on the North West coast of Tasmania inside one of the strongest growing businesses within the region. From humble beginnings and very few workers, this business has grown to become a diversified business that caters for all retail sectors including gourmet lines, smallgoods and a full range of fine poultry products, supplemented by a growing wholesale trade.

Sharmans Butchery is located at Wivenhoe, Burnie, and is underpinned by locals and team members that have grown with the business that now employs 14 personnel. Joint business directors Clint Sharman and Brock White live and breathe competency based training and fast tracking of their apprentices and food service staff, and this is clearly evident once within the business. Walking through the door I quickly realized that I was surrounded by not only extremely competent staff, but it looks like a butcher shop crèche as I take in the enthusiasm evident on the young faces on the staff within the store.

Sharmans have an excellent relationship with their chosen training organization - the Skills Institute, and Clint and Brock have made a business decision to support their apprentices with a combined mixed model of both on-job and off-job training.

Brock suggests that “The block release that the boys attend off-job training during their second and third years provides a fantastic opportunity for them to gain technical aspects of certain units of competency. We find that traditionally they may not obtain as good an understanding within the workplace at workplace speed of production. We find that the reduced learning pace that the butchery school provides is completely different to our normal workplace here at Sharmans. Not only does it provide a break from their normal environment, we also see a vast improvement in knife skills upon their return along with fresh ideas and a network of other apprentices from across our state.”

Both Clint and Brock feel it is essential to let the boys have some control of their training, and if they do the work and hone their skills, the duration of the training contract can be reduced as appropriate.

Brock continued, “From a business perspective, early completions do mean increased wages sooner, along with the opportunity for that newly completed tradesman to seek

other employment. But we find that it provides a platform and incentive for our apprentices to knuckle down and if they are genuinely keen and interested they can complete earlier.”

Brock explained, “Our business has developed to the stage that we continually employ apprentices. We generally have two apprentices on our books at any one time; but due to the fact we just had a couple of completions, we are looking to hire again. I think we have trained five apprentices through to full qualification within the past three and a half years. We train all our guys to a high standard, and the expectation from Clint and myself may at times (to our staff at least) seem a bit extreme, but we are continually raising the bar to service both existing and new clientele. When our apprentices have completed and become qualified tradespersons, our business expectations are continued on through each and every one of them. We train for the future and will often continue to employ after the apprenticeship has completed. In the unusual situation when we do have a team member leave, we know that whichever business picks up one of our butchers, they have a very competent person.”

“We have and will continue to hire and employ apprentices as we can train them to suit our business, fit the mould that is not just what we want, but what our customers demand and as well we seem to achieve a better strike rate with tradesmen.”

“Fast tracking and early completions are critical for staff morale and if they do strive to achieve, and they are performing as a tradesperson why shouldn’t they be rewarded?”

This is a successful business built around a very sound training platform, with a refreshing overview of competency based and fast tracking of apprentices!