

Admin training company's best scenarios

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The VET system takes a pro-active approach to learning and training in the workplace in its bid to create a world competitive workforce with recognisable and transferable skills. However, the ability and willingness to embrace flexible delivery depends upon the training culture in the workplace, according to the Admin Training Company's independent research into best practice traineeships in Queensland¹

Since new-style traineeships were introduced in 1995, the number of trainees has nearly trebled in four years in the field of business administration. ATC's research into best practice scenarios concluded that the VET system works well so long as all parties are clear about their contractual obligations and their roles and responsibilities. In addition, the role of supervisors and managers in facilitating a culture of open-learning was of paramount importance.

According to a recent survey conducted by the *Office Professionals*² administration workers are reinventing their roles in business. They are handling many tasks previously left to managers, such as hiring and training new staff and supervising the work of others. However, their skills and knowledge could be maximised by organisations supporting their continued growth with training.

This message underpins many of the successful projects with which the ATC has been involved, for instance the Centrelink pilot project involving team leaders and customer service officers to Level 4 and Level 5 and Monash University's pilot project involving administration workers to Level 4.

This year, Centrelink abandoned its ad hoc approach to technical training in favour of skilling its team leaders and customer service officers in generic skills such as interpersonal customer service, organization and team skills, proving that in planning for a high technology future it is the "quality of human interaction that makes the advances in workplace learning possible and not the technology."³ The Admin Training Company developed resources based on the Administration Competency Standards which assisted Centrelink's focus on a holistic approach to skill development.

Monash University chose the Level 4 Certificate in business administration because of its flexibility. The easy-to-use format and straightforward style of the ATC's Level 4 Business Admin Kit was also the favoured resource, proving another tenet of our Queensland research - that it is the quality of the resources and commitment by

1 *Research project into Best Practice Traineeships in Queensland 1999* undertaken by G Graham & Associates, commissioned by the Admin Training Company.

2 The *Office Professionals* is a newsletter for administrative assistants, secretaries and office support staff published by Professional Training Associates, Inc in Texas, USA. It circulated over 3,000 surveys to administrative professionals in a broad range of fields.

3 Alistair Rylatt, "Workplace learning - a new box and dice", *Training and Development in Australia*, Vol. 26, No. 3, June 1999

management that makes the difference in work-based training.

Participants in the Monash pilot-program were instrumental in streamlining administrative processes. For example, at Level 4, tangible improvements such as more efficient systems, better communication flows and financial procedures were clearly evident. Overall, managers were impressed with the improved systems being implemented that impacted upon the communication and efficiency of their workplace

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