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IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

Regarding CPD training I've heard a lot of bitching and moaning going on about the funding of it. Why is it such a big deal?

Ed:

A lot of people don't like change and when it occurs it takes them a while to see the benefits of it. Now we know that CPD imposed under the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 1976 was illegal. Proven illegal, done and dusted, however organisations and businesses jumped on the band wagon and got behind it for their own reasons.

When the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 was implemented CPD was again imposed on practitioners to a greater extent than it was under the 1976 Act. Again some industry organisations and businesses got behind it milking what they could out of it.

It is still debated whether the CPD scheme was

The provision of off-the-job training is a must.



Decisions must be made by practitioners, and in particular employers of apprentices - hard decisions that require change! Change never comes easy and some fear change so collectively we must prepare for change and train ourselves to let go of what we have had to get something better for our future.

In "Food for Thought" last

week we stated:

The current system of assessments every 17 weeks seems to be failing and is a waste of valuable resources. However, the time away from work is valuable for apprentices as the "off- the- job" training provides them the opportunity to talk to other apprentices and share experiences which are a valuable part of learning. Training is critical to success.

When it comes to apprenticeships the Federation believes off -the-job training is essential, as is on the job training, so what is the difference?

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING methods are *simple and cost effective training* methods whereby apprentices are *trained in actual working scenarios*. The motto of such training is *"learning by doing."* The basic theme - Apprentice learns the method **involved and gets competency over a specific task**.

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING methods are provided *away from the actual working conditions*. It is generally used in the case of *apprentices. Costly and effective* . Off-the-job training is also called *vestibule training* i.e. the apprentices are trained in a separate area where the *actual working conditions are duplicated*.

In brief on-the-job training is real world experience with the apprentice on-the-job, and off-the-job training is theory and skills usually delivered by training organisations off the job.

There are advantages and disadvantages in both types of training such as on-the-job training is generally most cost effective where apprentices are actually productive whilst given the opportunity to learn and work alongside colleagues.

implemented in a legal manner under the 2006 Act but let's not get into that discussion at this point, as that will be proven in the future when common sense prevails.

Some industry organisations, suppliers and retailers have been supporting CPD ever since CPD was imposed on practitioners.

There is no doubt practitioners have been assisted in meeting questionable obligations by being supplied with CPD points, however what tradespeople need to remember is the retailers, suppliers and training providers are in business to make money or gain membership or market share.

They haven't been doing it out of the goodness of their hearts for the benefit of the practitioners - it's simply been a business decision.

Think of it this way, if CPD courses hadn't been provided by organisations and businesses - would the scheme have even been implemented?

The issue that has occurred now is that those organisations and businesses have lost their captive market whereby practitioners, needing points to enable them to register and licence, have been forced to attend their training or marketing activities.

Now they are floundering wondering what they can do to gain their market share.

Some have been quick off the mark taking opportunities offered and others hesitated and now aren't happy. Some are now wondering if there is value

The disadvantages are the quality depends on the ability of the trainer/employer and the time available. Bad habits might be passed on and the learning environment may not be conducive and there could be disruption to production.

Off-the-job training has the advantage that a wider range of skills or qualifications can be obtained. Apprentices can learn from specialists or experts, however there is the disadvantage of it being more expensive and there is the lost working time and potential output from the apprentice.

Off-the-job training can also cover those areas that the employer does not – it will give the Apprentice a wider awareness of skills they may or may not have. While often broad brush stroked – it should cover all skills needed in the trades.

There is an added advantage with off-the-job training where if administrated properly, the training throughout the entire country would be the same. Consistency in training brings consistency in knowledge and skills.

As mentioned above, one of the disadvantages of on-the-job training is there is no quality control and it is easy for bad habits to be passed on. The Federation believes the main focus on apprentice training should be by way of off-the-job training to ensure consistency and quality.

The current system relies on on-the-job training and 17 weeks of assessments. We question if this is value for money and the best application of resources, and more importantly are apprentices being provided with the skills and knowledge needed for them to become **FULLY COMPETENT**?

A re-design of the training is required and this should be led by practitioners and employers of apprentices as they know what is needed by the industry. Ownership of the training scheme will lead to confidence in it by apprentices and their employers, and also the employers of former apprentices.

Setting of national standards created by practitioners and employers will provide assurances that all apprentices in the industry have been assessed against the same standard, using the same assessment approach.

The system needs to ensure that employers have confidence that apprentices trained and assessed in different parts of the country at different times have reached the same standard.

An apprenticeship standard needs to set out what an apprentice should know and be able to do at the end of the apprenticeship, **FULL COMPETENCY**, not partial competency as it currently does.

The system should be looking at end point assessment which shifts the focus of apprenticeships to the outcome: the apprentice that has **FULL COMPETENCY**. Reducing assessments allows trainers to focus on training rather than assessments and accreditations. The current system seems to direct resources to meet bureaucratic

for money in supporting CPD. The new CPD scheme implemented by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board is the first one that is using subjects identified by the industry as being necessary. The Government have said it is okay for there to be a cost associated with this so practitioners have to pay.

If suppliers, retailers and other organisations want to sponsor the CPD activities to keep costs down for practitioners then well and good.

For those organisations and businesses that missed out on the marketing opportunities perhaps you may want to visit the past and try the personal approach to practitioners.

Simply walk up to them and offer to reimburse them the money they are required to pay to attend the CPD session.

Thanks....

The recent series of articles on Apprenticeships has obviously struck a chord out there – we've seen an increase in membership since we started this series of articles – so thanks – remember, membership is open to anyone who cares about fairness and equity in regulation and legislation. Apprentices, administration people, licensed and certifying – all have an equal voice in our organisation.

demands.

A further advantage with this idea is that it will produce a product that the general public and the Regulator can have confidence in. It should produce tradespeople who are **FULLY COMPETENT** and therefore reduce a lot of the work our Regulator has to do.

Does this mean work done on NZQA qualifications has been wasted - no it doesn't. The work thus far will need to be reviewed and amended to meet current needs.

Perhaps it is time for a grading system that is simple and meaningful to employers, denoting exceptional performance but giving confidence that all qualifying apprentices have met the required standard of **FULL COMPETENCY**. Many sectors/qualifications use a Fail; Pass; Merit; Distinction scale which seems to meet the needs of many.

The training required by an apprentice is substantial and must allow enough time for new learning and for it to become embedded as second nature. The apprentice must become **FULLY COMPETENT** and confident in their new role as a Registered Tradesperson.

The Federation believes all apprenticeships will therefore be required to last a minimum period which it currently estimates to be 5 years, to become **FULLY COMPETENT**. To protect against poor quality delivery of training there should be no exceptions to this. The duration needs to be set by practitioners and employers.

In essence we are asking for a one step registration system – a 5 year apprenticeship, with the registration examination embedded in it and when an apprentice is completed they are registered and can sign their own work off, do not require supervision and are in line with their colleagues in the building and electrical trades.

Food for Thought



Performance requirements need to be thought about carefully taking into account the future needs of the industry - don't let the fear of what could happen make nothing happen.

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