

£190 billion bounty for construction employers

The latest figures from the Construction Skills Network show that in addition to the ongoing repair and maintenance work and general construction projects already in existence, there are still more than 7,500 new projects anticipated over the next five years – with a total value of nearly £190 billion



In order to help firms take advantage of this future demand, ConstructionSkills, the organisation responsible for construction training and skills provision in the UK, is working closely with employers to help them develop their approach to training and retaining safe and productive staff.

The business benefits of qualifying the workforce are clear: well-trained employees have fewer accidents, take less time off work, are more productive and make fewer errors. Not to mention with skilled workers on the team, small businesses find that they can take on more work and avoid the costs of hiring-in expensive sub-contractors.

CJ Ellmore and Co Ltd, specialising in bank and building society refurbishments, are proof of the benefits of training. Ian Usher, Senior Contacts Manager, said: "We decided that we were taking on too many senior sub-contractors on our bank refurbishments, so we selected half a dozen of our own joiners and sent them on ceiling installation courses that came recommended by ConstructionSkills. They eventually took on the work themselves, giving us a guarantee of reliability and developing their own skill sets into the bargain."

EMPLOYERS TAKE THE LEAD

Employers are set to have an increasingly influential role in training and developing their staff. Recommendations in the Leitch Review of Skills published last December recognised that giving

employers a powerful voice to influence skills training provision is the best way to ensure that the construction industry gets the 'fit for purpose' training and skills development that it needs.

Val Lowman of Bovis Lend Lease said: "Employer-led training is something Bovis has been championing for many years now and we believe a demand led approach is the only way to secure the future growth of our industry."

Indeed, every area of industry will be affected by the sector's rapid growth, but the highest increases in employment will be seen in craft skills such as bricklayers and building specialists who work on the external skin of a building. Painters and decorators, scaffolders and wood trade occupations are also all set to witness significant growth.

Over 32% of the recruits forecast for the next five years are needed to fill roles as construction managers, architects and technical staff, or as senior executives, business process managers or office based and technical/IT recruits.

Construction growth is expected to shift from the North to the South and East driven by the concentration of Olympics and related projects. However all regions are expected to see some growth between 2007 and 2011 with the highest levels of demand in the Southern counties.

Continuing the trend started in 2006, Greater London, the South East and the East of England should have increased their share of total

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construction output from 38.4% (2005) to 41.1% by 2011.

The future of the construction industry looks healthy and it is those companies who have staff with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time who stand to capitalise the most – and investing in training is the only way to guarantee that.

In order to maximise their business potential ConstructionSkills would urge businesses of all sizes to start thinking now about up-skilling and qualifying their staff and training up new recruits – their business can only benefit in the future.

To ensure construction businesses reap the benefits, employers are being urged to call 0870 0777 248, or for more information, visit www.constructionskills.net

