



# WELL worth it

## The company

PMP Printing is Australia's largest commercial printer, producing 155 magazine titles, 3 billion catalogues and 30 million directories annually. In Queensland the company employs 170 people full time. As in many manufacturing environments, the workforce is predominantly male. There is limited staff turnover with an average length of employment of twelve years.

## Peter Robinson's advice to others thinking of taking on WELL training:

- Set clear, measurable objectives for the training, e.g. 'improving the quality of communication with customers', so that progress can be identified and celebrated.
- Ensure you fully engage senior managers or decision-makers to support the training. The PMP WELL trainer had quarterly meetings with the General Manager as well as weekly consultations with the HR and Production Managers.
- Recognise that communications skills are necessary at all levels, not just on the 'shop floor'. PMP developed a series of 'Plain English' workshops which were attended by all staff.

## PMP PRINTING HAS ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION WITH INTERNAL CUSTOMERS AND USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN ITS SECOND YEAR OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S WORKPLACE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY (WELL) TRAINING PROGRAM IN QUEENSLAND.

WELL training was introduced in 2006 to help improve teamwork and communication skills in preparation for the introduction of the company's manufacturing excellence plan. The plan requires employees to be more accountable for meeting key performance indicators and achieving production targets and PMP recognised that building employee skills in advance would be important for a successful transition.

Initially training focussed on supporting supervisors and 'number 1 printers' who had typically come up through the ranks of the company to lead press teams. By the end of the first year seventy per cent of the workforce had benefited from WELL communications training as word of mouth spread and supervisors requested the training for their teams.

A further programme of individual support from the on-site WELL trainer was introduced in 2007. Recognising that production demands often made it difficult to get people off the presses for group training, the trainer and PMP management developed a program of individual and small group training for print supervisors. The program covered team leader skills, safety and conflict resolution and was linked to the introduction of major new equipment and the formation of new production teams and leadership roles. The individual support program provided value for money for the company and ensured that training was directly relevant to the operators' work.

One-on-one training also meant that very focussed support was provided and staff were able to work with the trainer over time on real-life communication problems. As communication skills between supervisors, team leaders and team members improved the trainer observed an improvement in productivity and product quality, and less need for 're-working'.

HR Manager, Peter Robinson, sees the skills and experience of the WELL trainer, Michael Bunney from Southbank Institute of Technology, as being key to the success of the WELL training. 'Michael gained the trust of our employees by being on site regularly, by listening to people and developing flexible training that really made sense to them.'

Michael Bunney agrees that trust and flexibility are central.

*Initially people were a little sceptical about doing communications training, but once I was able to show that the training directly related to their job, by improving their written communication with internal and external customers and helping supervisory staff communicate more effectively with team members and vice-versa, people were gradually won over.*

As a result of the program, operators and supervisors went on to take up promotional opportunities and communicate more effectively with senior management – a result that Peter Robinson describes as the proudest outcome of the PMP WELL training.

## AND WOULD HE RECOMMEND WELL TRAINING TO OTHER COMPANIES?

*Yes, as long as you are clear on your objectives and have senior managers on side.*



## CUSTOMISED TRAINING

The Australian Government's Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program provides funding to help employers run training that is tailor-made for their workplace. WELL training integrates language, literacy and numeracy skill development with job-related workplace training. It is designed to help employees meet their current and future employment and training requirements.

Businesses have used integrated training programs to:

- Increase workforce flexibility and responsibility
- Support productivity and efficiency initiatives
- Build quality assurance processes
- Improve health and safety in the workplace
- Foster workforce confidence and morale
- Encourage communication, consultation and teamwork

The key to successful WELL training is developing and implementing a program that truly meets organisation, workplace and worker needs. To do this you need a good understanding of the organisation's training needs and workforce profile, and a strong partnership between the employer and the training provider.

## RECOGNISED QUALIFICATIONS

The strength of the WELL program is the combination of language, literacy and numeracy skills development with valued vocational outcomes. WELL allows workers to work toward recognised industry qualifications.

WELL training has been used to support the achievement of qualifications, skill sets and competencies from IBSA's 11 national Training Packages in areas such as:

- Frontline Management
- Financial Literacy
- Workplace Trainer and Assessor
- Information Technology
- Customer Contact
- Business Administration
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Printing and Print Production Support
- Museum Practice and Library/Information Services
- Broadcasting
- Arts Administration

From 2008 apprentices training in a nationally recognised area of skill shortage will also be eligible to access the WELL program.

## Better Business Through Innovation

IBSA is one of 11 authorised Industry Skills Councils and is Australia's official voice on skills and training for industries underpinning the innovation economy:

- Business Services
- Cultural & Related Industries
- Education
- Financial Services
- Information & Communication Technologies
- Printing and Graphic Arts

IBSA's mission is to build the capability, professionalism and innovative capacity of the Australian workforce. Our workforce development products and services reflect real industry skill requirements and are designed to foster innovation in thinking and practice.



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**



**For more Information on the WELL Program:**

Telephone 133 873

Website [www.deewr.gov.au/well](http://www.deewr.gov.au/well)

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