



Trefnant Garage Limited: how National Occupational Standards strengthen employee confidence and raise the profile of a small enterprise in rural Wales

Background

Trefnant Garage was founded over 80 years ago in the Vale of Clwyd. Eight years ago, it was taken over by Lyn Morgan, Managing Director. Two years later the garage became part of the Bosch Car Service Network who are responsible for making components for a wide range of cars including Mercedes Benz, VW and Audi . With 75 per cent of the work at the garage devoted to Mercedes Benz cars, Lyn markets the business as the leading independent Mercedes Benz specialist garage in North Wales.

Lyn, who had previously been the Workshop Foreman for a local Mercedes Benz dealer in North Wales, employs a workforce of eight. The core work at Trefnant Garage is car repairs and has a turnover of around 50 to 60 cars being seen each week. Much of the work comes through customer recommendations.

Creating a benchmark with NOS

Lyn first became aware of National Occupational Standards (NOS) in early 2011 when he, along with some of his team, went along to their local college to take part in some training in hybrid cars, and air conditioning:

“It was apparent,” he says, “that NOS was the new standard that was recognised and that this was what businesses should be working to now. It means, of course, that there will be an equal benchmark across the country and that all qualifications will have a standard that is widely respected within the relevant industry. It can, of course, be seen as a sign of quality.”

Providing recognisable, transferable skills

This year Lyn has supported an apprentice who has completed his NVQ Level 3 and his ATA (Automotive Technician Accreditation). He is one of the first of Lyn’s employees to have qualifications based on NOS, following his training in hybrid cars, and air conditioning – the others being Lyn himself and a colleague. With regard to future developments, Lyn emphasises the further links that could be made within the automobile industry:



“I would support any development between NOS and the ATA. Working in the motor industry is really difficult and it’s easy for people to underestimate the skills that are required.”



“I would support any development between NOS and the ATA. Working in the motor industry is really difficult and it’s easy for people to underestimate the skills that are required. Many employees in the industry feel undervalued and don’t get the respect that they deserve. As a result, I believe that we need to raise the profile of the work by giving employees the opportunity to upskill their qualifications which run in line with NOS. Employees should then feel that they have recognisable, transferable qualifications in the industry which would certainly go a long way to boosting their confidence.”

Recruiting staff and maintaining customer confidence

Looking forward a couple of years, Lyn believes that NOS could be an asset when he is recruiting for the garage. He says:

“We would certainly be looking at the qualifications based on NOS because they are regarded as a benchmark of quality. The industry is fairly transient so it would be useful to know that potential recruits bring with them NOS related qualifications. Furthermore, any existing employees or new recruits who undergo training on a manufacturing course, for instance, would attain an IMI (The Institute of the Motor Industry) qualification, but that will then be able to be tracked over to NOS.

“Whether in recessionary times or not, it is vital for a business like ours to maintain the highest of standards and for its employees to keep up with latest qualifications and, as Managing Director of Trefnant Garage, I would like to see our customers having more confidence in both my staff and the business as a whole following the introduction of NOS into our ongoing training programme.”

Intelligence > Investment > Impact

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills is a Non-Departmental Public Body providing strategic leadership on skills and employment issues in the four nations of the UK. Together, our Commissioners comprise a social partnership that includes CEOs of large and small employers across a wide range of sectors; trade unions and representatives from the Devolved Administrations. Our mission is to work with and through our partners to secure a greater commitment to invest in the skills of people to drive, enterprise, jobs and growth.