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SCHAEFFLER (UK) LTD, SUTTON COLDFIELD

Schaeffler UK wins National Training Award

Schaeffler (UK) Ltd's automotive component manufacturing plant in Llanelli has been awarded a Wales Training Award in recognition of the company's excellence in training, people development and organisational change.

Schaeffler (UK) Ltd's manufacturing plant in Llanelli, South Wales has been awarded a Wales Training Award 2009 in the 'Partnership and Collaboration' category of the National Training Awards (NTA).

The award was given in recognition of the plant's working partnership with Brilliant Minds Training & Development, a company that specialises in behaviour and attitude change in business.

The awards ceremony took place on 12th November 2009 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno. Accepting the award on behalf of Schaeffler UK were Managing Director Kate Hartigan, Director of Human Resources Adrian Roberts and Training Officer Donna Williams-Bevan.

Schaeffler and Brilliant Minds were one of 15 finalists from Wales that were shortlisted from more than 800 NTA entries. The NTAs are designed to celebrate organisations and individuals that demonstrate outstanding business and personal success through investment in training. By recognising best practice, the awards aim to raise awareness and inspire others to invest in learning and development.

Working together, Schaeffler and Brilliant Minds adopted a technique known as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in order to increase the flexibility of both the mindset and behaviour of management at the Llanelli plant. This involved focusing on overcoming obstacles to learning, promoting effective communication throughout the company and by encouraging employees to become more self-aware.

Roger Evans, Plant Director at Schaeffler UK commented: "We recognised that our style of management and the happiness of staff were fundamental to the overall success of the plant. Adopting the NLP programme with the help of Brilliant Minds has encouraged an increase in emotional resilience. Although there have been some significant problems to face during the last 18 months, people here now seem more able to deal with these issues and are less likely to become stressed because of them."

"There have also been numerous examples of managers engaging in more detailed, productive conversations with staff, either to explain changes or to better understand issues that need solving," he added.

Dianne Lowther, Principal Trainer for Brilliant Minds: “At a time when most companies in the automotive sector are cutting costs and reducing investment in training and development, this organisation [Schaeffler UK] has shown concrete ‘bottom-line’ benefits from maintaining its focus on people as its sustainable source of competitive advantage.”

“What makes this programme exceptional is the commitment of Schaeffler’s directors and senior managers to the development of staff as well as their own development. Many of these people undertook 15 days of training in 12 months and despite the downturn in business from the automotive sector, showed a tangible improvement in business performance,” she added.

The National Training Awards are organised by the Welsh Assembly Government’s Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) and are promoted and supported in partnership with UK Skills on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Established in 1955, Schaeffler UK’s plant manufactures high precision engine components for the automotive market. The plant currently employs 260 people and is an autonomous subsidiary of the multi-national German-owned Schaeffler Group.

Investing in the development and skills of its people has always been a high priority for Schaeffler UK. Since the culture change programme was introduced to Llanelli in 2001, the plant has made significant improvements, even through the current economic recession. Almost every operator has now achieved NVQ Level II in Performing Manufacturing Operations. Many have also requested to proceed to NVQ Level III and all employees at the plant have now undergone training in 5S Workplace Organisation. There are currently seven engineering apprentices and two graduate trainees at the plant.

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