

JBC Computer Training

Microsoft Technology Associate Success Story (May 2013)

JBC Computer Training is one of the leading providers of IT Training in the Midlands. They have been offering Technical IT Training Courses in the Coventry area for over 20 years to 16-18 year old Apprentices, Graduates, the Unemployed and also to the Armed Forces. In May 2013, JBC Computer Training was recognised as a Prodigy Learning 'Centre of Excellence' for delivering over 250 Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) Exams in 2012.



Interview with Trevor Hopkins (TH), Director of Training, JBC Computer Training

Why did you decide to offer Microsoft Technology Associate?

TH "We were keen to offer our learners something that was recognised and respected by industry, something that made our learners stand out as knowledgeable and skilled ICT engineers. At the time we were encouraging our learners to look towards the Windows 7 MCTS qualification but the amount of practical background required and question style put these qualifications out of reach for a number of apprentices. When Prodigy demonstrated the Microsoft Technology Associate qualifications to us we felt that we had found what we were looking for. We ran a small pilot program and the feedback we received from our learners convinced us to embed MTAs into our core programmes."

What do you like most about Microsoft Technology Associate?

TH "There are so many positives to choose from! I love the way that learners are passionate about earning the accreditation, are motivated towards this achieving this goal and the sense of accomplishment they get from being able to add "Microsoft Certified" to their CV. I think they set an individual on the right path for a successful IT future. The nature of the qualifications allow an individual to 'try' an area of IT, get a feel for it and see if it is a good fit for them. The exams are accessible to a wider range of learners and serve as a solid foundation on which the individual can build towards qualifications like MCSA and MCSE."

Why do you think Microsoft Technology Associate is important?

TH "They offer learners the opportunity to prove to employers that they have been recognised by a leading vendor as having skills in these areas. They provide a valuable stepping stone for school leavers between academic qualifications and industry's preferred vendor qualifications. Prior to us offering MTAs we found a number of learners were put off even considering vendor qualifications the first time they met a 70-680 mock. The MTAs change this - they reward the investment already made and encourage learners to progress on to higher qualifications and programmes."

Does Microsoft Technology Associate attract learners?

TH "The MTAs definitely help attract learners. I think in the current economic climate learners from all walks of life are recognising the need for them to stand out from the crowd and offer something extra if they are to get ahead. I think the recognition of a leading ICT vendor like Microsoft is a big draw."

Has delivering Microsoft Technology Associate had a positive impact?

TH "I think it has had a very positive impact. Learners are motivated to study for them and are thrilled when they pass the exams. This creates a buzz which encourages other learners to push themselves on. The MTAs are a great bridging qualification between the vocational qualifications and vendor certification offerings. They reward learners for the progress they have made so far and encourage further study."

How do you deliver Microsoft Technology Associate?

TH "The content of the MTA qualifications is embedded within our core programme both in terms of theory and practice so we use the MTAs as a way of encouraging independent study and revision. The benefit we have found with this approach is that the learner's drive to achieve the Microsoft qualification also helps them achieve the vocational qualification - it's a bit like the parent trick of mixing the nasty green vegetables in with the tasty stuff. Learners often tell us they don't like revising for assignments but tell us they want to study for the MTAs - so we let them. Little do they know they are revising for their assignments at the same time!"

Has the new Exam Pack been beneficial to the Training Centre?

TH "Yes, very much so. Without it we would have to consider very carefully whether we could continue to offer the MTAs as part of our programme. I certainly think that it would be unlikely that we would be in a position to fund the qualifications as we do at present."



Trevor Hopkin's (Director of Training) & Bill Jaspal (Managing Director) being presented their Centre of Excellence Award by Regional Sales Manager Martin Lewarne. This article appeared in the Business Section of the Coventry Observer on 25th April 2013.