

Case Study

Highland Colour Coaters

semta

The Sector Skills Council
for Science, Engineering and
Manufacturing Technologies



“The training we've initiated will help us ensure that the high standards demanded by our new process are met and exceeded. We've established a good working relationship with Semta that will give us valuable advice, guidance and support going forward.”

Robert Tait
Quality Director

Meeting skills needs with Business To Skills and SCQF model

When Highland Colour Coaters launched a new process it contacted Semta to ensure the company had the right skills to maximise its potential. Semta responded by helping the company to identify needs, find suitable training and source funding – now and for the future.

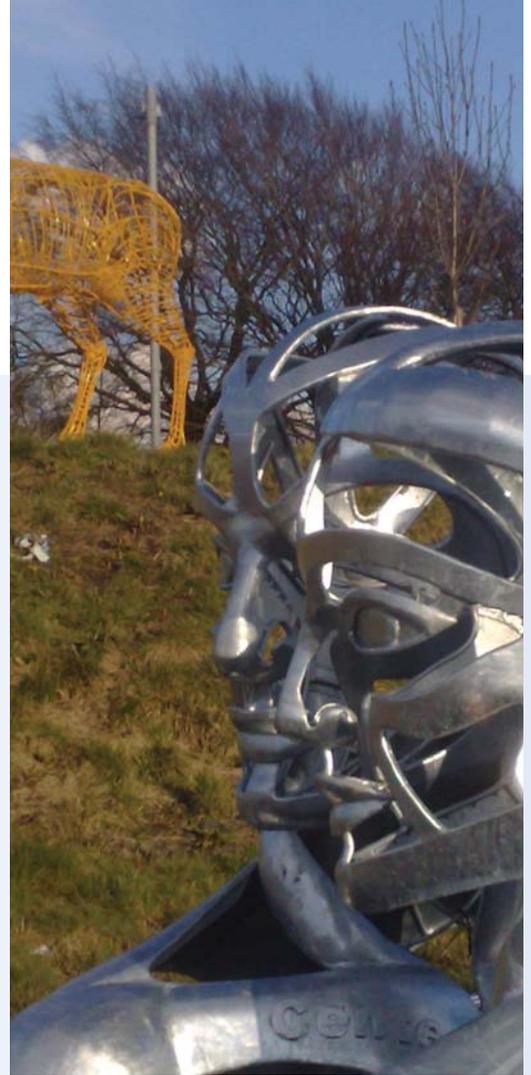
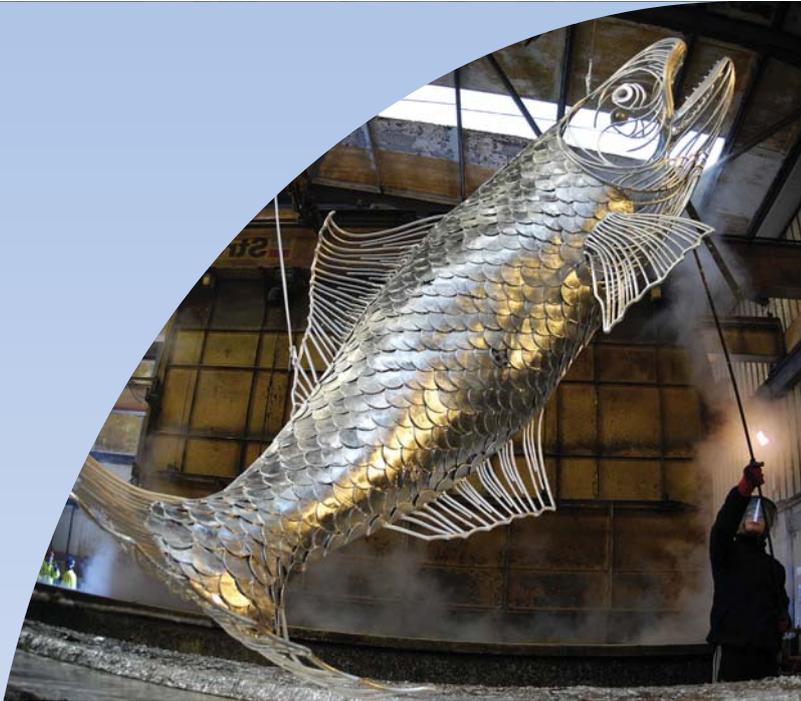
Cumbernauld-based Highland Colour Coaters, together with sister company Highland Galvanizers in Elgin, employ around 110 people. The company's innovative 'Colourgal' process which blends hot dip galvanizing with powder coating demanded exceptionally high quality levels. Quality Director, Robert Tait, recognised that the new offering to customers – and the continued squeeze on prices in traditional markets – presented challenges for the business.

The first step was to carry out a Business To Skills (B2S) diagnosis. “Using Semta's Business To Skills diagnostic tool, I was able to identify that to meet the quality standards the company strategy demanded, staff in my department would require upskilling and additional training,” said Robert.

Semta used the model it had developed to help employers engage with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) to pinpoint exactly the type of training the company

required. It meant looking at what the individual needed to be able to do in the job role, then identifying the corresponding SCQF level before narrowing down appropriate qualifications or courses.

Robert explained: “Semta enabled me to quickly make a comparison of characteristics in the SCQF level descriptors to precisely identify the level of training required without making any assumptions. For example, the team needed to have a generalised knowledge of quality rather than a basic one, and be able to use a wide range of communication, ICT, and numeracy skills. This indicated that we needed training at SCQF Level 6 (and not Levels 5 or 7). From this I determined that modules from the Diploma in Quality Management from the Chartered Quality Institute were the best option for us. My local Semta Business Partner was then able to help me access funds to facilitate this training to start.”



Training is being delivered by distance learning through Aberdeen College. Completing the B2S exercise entitled the company to a grant from the Iron & Steel Trust. Highland Colour Coaters is the first company in Scotland to access this fund.

Identifying the immediate quality training need led the company to examine other needs through a second B2S exercise which Semta conducted with managers across both sites. Action plans were drawn up to address these. They include assigning responsibility within the business for skills development and improving quality, cost and delivery. Training in B-IT

emerged as a useful action and the Flexible 7000 fund was identified as a potential source of funding. Their new awareness of the age profile also prompted the management team to address supervisory and management training for succession planning.

“The quality training we’ve initiated will help us ensure that the high standards demanded by our ‘Colourgalv’ process are met and exceeded,” said Robert. “In addition, we’ve established a good working relationship with Semta that will give us valuable advice, guidance and support going forward.”

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