

McFarlane Telfer – Assured



Refreshing learning and development strategy serves up commercial success for McFarlane Telfer Ltd

In the midst of economic and political uncertainty, many organisations have battled to survive and maintain their market position. However Catering & Refrigeration business, McFarlane Telfer Ltd, are bucking this trend, reporting 30% growth each year since 2009.

A well-established SME, in operation for over 25 years, MCFT services major corporate customers in education, healthcare, major venues and the public sector, providing commercial catering and refrigeration equipment to their high end client base.

Their phenomenal growth has won them a number of industry awards and attention.

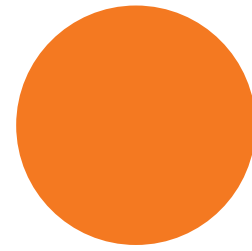
CEO Chris Craggs, cites the main reason behind this growth is how MCFT has identified customer and regulatory needs and matched training and development to achieve the optimal offer.

Passionate about training and development, Craggs firmly believes that skills development - across technical, soft and leadership skills - is the main driver for their recent business growth, both in the UK and internationally.

“We have a genuine business commitment to developing our people, and firmly believe that this commitment has driven our huge growth and success over the last decade in particular.

To meet our customer's needs, we have developed high quality bespoke training that has driven up standards, skills and customer satisfaction. This is something we are all very proud of."

Chris Craggs, CEO, MCFT



Building talent and skills from within

Working in such a unique and niche area with no suitable qualifications or apprenticeship routes to meet their business needs, their ongoing business development strategy was based on the need to provide excellent service.

In order to raise the levels of skills and standards MCFT embarked on a journey of building talent from within. They have developed their own training driven by senior engineers and technical leads to upskill their own employees. This structure has been built over many years, with evidenced portfolios tested and signed off by mentors and technical leads. The standard is very high, for instance each engineer has a folder containing their training schedule with a checklist of skills they need to achieve. Each skill is observed on site and signed off by their mentor, and if they don't achieve the required levels, they are not able to continue on the course.

This approach has ensured that they can tailor their training to suit their specific business needs, and ultimately deliver a fantastic service to their customers - including some very high-end and demanding businesses such as well-known and established high street chains.

Plugging the skills gap

Recruitment has been a challenge for MCFT for many years. High quality engineers with the niche skillset required to work for MCFT are hard to come by.

The company identified skills gaps and challenges when attempting to recruit staff with the required technical and soft skills. The need to invest significantly in in-house employee training became obvious.

To achieve their ambitious growth plans and business goals they put in place training at every level and the results have been spectacular.

MCFT has grown by 30% a year since 2009 and have ambitions to grow 30% annually for the next 10 years.

In financial terms they have grown from £0.9M turnover in 2009 to a forecast of £12M this year.

This growth has been achieved working for demanding, multi-national brands – whilst garnering great feedback and growing industry recognition. Training is largely developed and delivered in-house and flexed to meet the needs of the learners, many of whom are from a non-academic background. Alongside such thorough technical training, MCFT runs a 14 module leadership academy that covers all aspects of the business.

Turnover growth

**£0.9m
2009**

to a forecast of

**£12m
2018**



Exporting skills – growing in the Gulf

Whilst MCFT set out as a UK business, more recently they have branched out internationally – with a growing presence in the Gulf region with offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar with imminent office openings in Saudi Arabia, servicing restaurant chains and hotels as well as businesses. Their businesses in the Gulf have developed greatly over the last 4 years, boasting a team of over 40 people - leading to MCFT being recognised as market leaders in their field.

The standards delivered in the GCC are the same as the UK, delivered by the same team leaders to the same criteria. This train the trainer programme has worked well, and ensures consistent levels of skills and knowledge across the region.

Furthermore where these growth opportunities have arisen and new managers have been required, recent graduates have been employed and 'fast tracked' to fill the new posts.

Craggs explains the impact that training and development has across multiple stakeholders, individuals and customers;

'The benefits of training are felt by all stakeholders. Through high quality training and upskilling in this way customers win through great service, the business wins through customer satisfaction, and individuals win through recognition of their skills.'

Contact City & Guilds

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E assured@cityandguilds.com

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To find out more about more about the Princess Royal Training Awards go to:

princessroyaltrainingawards.com

Proud commitment to high quality training

Over the last five years MCFT has gained many industry recognised accreditations – including Investors in People (IIP) Platinum status and more recently the Princess Royal Training Awards from the City & Guilds Group.

The prestigious Princess Royal Training Awards recognise organisations who can prove that their outstanding training and skills development programmes have resulted in exceptional commercial benefits for their business.

In addition MCFT have also achieved City & Guilds and ILM Assured status for four of their training programmes including their Leadership Academy (UK and Gulf regions), Commercial Kitchen Technician (Gulf region), Commercial Catering Engineer (UK) and Commercial Fridge Engineer (UK).

The 'Assured' training quality mark from City & Guilds and ILM recognises world class in-house training. The first step in this journey was through some pre-Assured consultancy delivered by City & Guilds that prepared them ahead of the assessment. This stage really prepared MCFT well, and led to their leadership programmes achieving ILM Assured status.

The programmes have been assessed against best practice standards with five key components: design and delivery, planning and management, employee/learner support, quality assurance; evaluation and continuous development.

Craggs reflects on the journey so far, and is delighted to be leading the way as the first organisation to receive Assured status for their in-house training;

"MCFT is very proud of the endorsement of the thoroughness of all four programmes, as well as being the very first organisation that has achieved Assured status for its programmes."

"MCFT gaining Assured status for four of their in-house training programmes demonstrates the high-quality of their training.

MCFT have very specific skills needs which sometimes can't be met by 'off the peg' qualifications and courses. By building their own bespoke courses and having them accredited with Assured they have been able to exactly meet their business's needs, whilst also retaining the stamp of quality that working with City & Guilds and ILM brings."

Kirstie Donnelly Managing Director
City & Guilds and ILM

