



NO NVQ?... THEN WE'LL MAKE OUR OWN

K2 has created its own in-house qualification.

The K2 *Certificate of Proficiency* has been introduced for technical skills not yet covered by National Vocational Qualifications.

This unique concept for the printing industry - directed by Training Officer, Bob Wright (pictured) - is structured like an NVQ but is specifically linked to specialist direct mailing skills in the inserting, folding, guillotining and hand mailing areas.

Details of the K2 qualification have been worked out in conjunction with specialist advisers from the *Manchester Training and Enterprise Council* and the *British Printing Industries Federation*.

"As changing technology becomes more complex and the demands of the direct mail industry become more challenging, *everyone* needs to learn more skills to compete more efficiently," says Bob Wright.

"And this level of commitment to training is central to K2's belief in improvement."

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PEOPLE A GILT EDGED INVESTMENT

An annually reviewed training and development plan for each staff member has been a priority at K2 since the company pledged itself to the Government's *Investors in People* scheme last year.

Kevan Coleman told the *Manchester Training and Enterprise Council*: "We have a long standing commitment to quality and we regard *Investors in People* as a natural extension of that commitment."

Investors in People - IIP- is a British national standard which has to be earned. It is sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry and administered through Training and Enterprise Councils in each region.

It involves everyone from the boardroom to the shop floor in improving and widening their skills for both personal benefit and company success.

"When a company motivates its people, it helps them broaden their skills and provides a framework for them to develop. We are talking about quality people building a quality company and achieving quality service for clients," says Kevan Coleman.

Peter Down, who is leading the IIP project at K2, explains: "In order to gain formal accreditation as an *Investor in People*, an organisation has to demonstrate that it encourages communication, involvement and commitment from all its employees in a way that naturally helps to improve quality, enhance the competitive edge, reduce costs and increase profitability".

First, managers and key staff were consulted as part of an initial survey of

all workforce and management skills necessary to conduct K2's business.

Each business process was examined - from winning an order, through all stages of production, to invoicing and chasing payment.

A comprehensive training programme was phased in to cover refresher training, upgrading skills and acquiring new ones... even cross-training people to do other jobs so that holidays and illness can be covered more efficiently.

The policy is to gear all training, throughout the staff, towards nationally recognised professional qualifications. As a result many employees have become involved in National Vocational Qualifications - from accountancy to digital reprographics. Three of these are engaged in levels 4 and 5 - demanding a study commitment equivalent to an Open University degree.

A further programme of management and supervisory skills training has involved some 80 people at all levels - from directors to machine assistants.

Add to that the encouragement to take a greater interest in the company itself, to contribute to improvement of procedures and working practices, to help reduce costs, improve quality, tighten safety guidelines and suggest new business opportunities... and IIP has established a framework for everyone to work in partnership within the company.

Says Peter Down: "K2 recognises those contributions. It believes in growing its own talent from within and rewarding the results.

"And that kind of investment is gilt-edged for everyone."