



## Middlesex University

### Lifelong Learning and workforce development through University – Business collaboration

Middlesex University works in partnership with Halifax Community Bank (part of the Lloyds Banking Group) to deliver an innovative and sustainable approach to workforce development that has enhanced opportunities for lifelong learning for over a 1,000 Halifax employees. The success of this partnership is predicated on the idea that Universities do not have a monopoly on knowledge production.

“Halifax searched the market for a ‘provider’ and Middlesex University were identified as having both the expertise and organisational commitment to be potential partners along with an impressive list of existing Work Based Learning relationships. A significant factor of Middlesex University is that it recognises that expertise exists in organisational workplaces and that Universities are not the sole owners of knowledge, expertise and skills.”

Halifax Community Bank: 2011

This partnership approach has contributed to the development of a sense of shared ownership of the delivery of higher education provision and has established the foundations for a sustainable partnership between the University and the Halifax. The approach is transferable to other University-Business collaborative contexts with the potential to further enhance opportunities for lifelong learning.

Halifax Community Bank provides personal financial services and it has a stated goal “to become Britain’s most recommended Bank, through making more of its customers better off”. To achieve this goal, the Bank identified the strategic need for higher-level training for over a 1,000 of its managers. This major investment in workforce development, called ‘Journey in Practice’ (JIP), was designed to raise the standards of retail banking practice across this national company. Middlesex worked initially with the Bank to recognise the knowledge and expertise of their staff using University’s Accreditation Service to enable those undertaking their in-company programme to gain higher education credit towards University qualifications.

The University subsequently used its Work Based Learning Framework to construct programmes (delivered by the University) leading to Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate qualifications in Retail Banking Practice. The design of these programmes integrated the in-company accredited learning within negotiated work-based learning projects that contribute directly to the achievement of business objectives.

The Halifax believe that the impact of these programmes is providing a significant return on investment that can be further applied within other areas of the Lloyds Banking Group.

“I know that by investing our money in this programme with Middlesex University, if everyone does what we want them to do in our business we will get a return that will repay that investment handsomely.”

Colin Kemp, Network Director, Halifax Community Bank:  
May 2011

“JIP is the Jewel in the Crown for Lloyds Banking Group in professionalising the retail banking workforce.”

(Peter Hallard – Group Learning Director).

“JIP is the benchmark of what good looks like for other areas of the group looking at professionalising their workforces.”

Halifax Community Bank: 2011

In addition, the Halifax have found ‘unexpected’ benefits from the engagement with higher-level learning that have had a significant impact on working practices to establish a culture of reflection and learning that has enhanced work performance.

“A great success has been the realisation by many of the learners of the great value of reflection in improving performance. Halifax is a very fast paced organisation and typically colleagues struggle to build in time to reflect, often not seeing its value. This programme has opened many learners’ eyes to the benefit of reflection in their work.

Using their reflective learning skills and elements of business plans produced for their Stage 3 qualification [the Advanced Diploma] these Branch Managers were able to apply these learnings back in branch to improve performance at a faster rate than colleagues who had not started Stage 3.”

Halifax Community Bank: 2011

In addition to the business benefits, the partnership between Middlesex and the Halifax has also provided valuable lifelong learning opportunities for individual employees.

“I felt immense pride that I had been given this opportunity to study and gain an academic qualification which would support me in my role and the work I do every day. Looking back, all the time, effort and commitment that was needed has paid off. I took such pride in having my family members with me at the graduation ceremony to receive my diploma.

I joined Halifax straight from college and to gain a qualification from a university, whilst carrying out my day job, is a fantastic opportunity. The added bonus being it will also prepare me for the year ahead with the Business Plan I will create as a result!”

Halifax Community Bank: 2011