

Altus Enterprises *Skills Highway*

People with diverse abilities are often underserved by the education system, so a not-for-profit organisation that provides them with jobs is working hard to help staff further their abilities in all sorts of beneficial ways across a number of key skillsets.

Altus Enterprises is an outsourcing charity that provide jobs for people with diverse abilities and needs, doing tasks such as packing and shaping pipes. The organisation employs 200 people and strives to create a space where people with disabilities are respected as valuable community members and workers.



Altus realised that its team often had learning deficiencies, particularly because people with intellectual and physical restrictions are often underserved in the education system. It is important that Altus employees can communicate with others and measure and count in their roles, so Altus instituted a series of training sessions to improve its employees' understanding of health and safety and financial literacy along with reading, writing, maths, speaking and listening.

Groups who volunteered for training meet every week to learn more about these various skills. The number of volunteers was so high that the company initially had difficulty managing them all, and more yet have volunteered after hearing that the training was successful from other participants. Altus has recently renovated a space to cater for more learners, and increased opportunities for team development in groups and project work across workstations.

The training plan was developed in collaboration with Edvance, and was designed to identify and address realistic outcomes for employees with diverse abilities and skills. The training includes subjects that benefit learners at work as well as in their communities.

As a result of this training, employees are now able to work more effectively with all of their team. Managers are noticing reduced miscommunication, and learners are better trained to accommodate the needs of other group members. Training participants have also created a powerful induction video, which is compulsory viewing for all visitors entering the workplace.

The skills that employees are gaining help them within Altus, but they are also empowered to more effectively operate in other workplaces, which will help them to better transition to other employment, where they will be able to identify and report hazards and risks, and collaborate in teams.

Employees are also demonstrating improvements in their knowledge of financial literacy, and have given very positive feedback about their ability to plan their finances more effectively.

Human Resources Manager Jo Karl says "These skills are invaluable for employees to develop transferable skills and confidence. A great outcome of this training is that employees are learning to work effectively as part of a team."

The training programme has gone down well with learners, too, with comments from participants saying they are “having fun, learning new things”, that the course gives “more skill when I want to learn”, and that it provides opportunities to meet new people in a fun environment. Learners say the programme feels like “fun and games” that also it “really taught me a lot”.

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