

The Source at Meadowhall

Property overview

The Source is an innovative and unique £5.5 million training and development centre set up by British Land and Sheffield City Council in 2003. Established as a charity, The Source provides a range of facilities including conference facilities, a gym, an IT learning centre, a crèche, a library and a coffee bar. This year, it was named National Skills Academy for Retail for South Yorkshire and was identified as one of the Top 20 Small Companies to Work For in the UK by The Times. It has also held the prestigious Centre of Vocational Excellence in Retail status since 2005.



Our customers and us

This year, The Source obtained over £900,000 of funding for training, of which more than £400,000 directly supported Meadowhall retailers. The Source offered all 250 Meadowhall retailers support with recruitment and training, meaning that Store Managers had more time to spend on creating the right retail environment to encourage sales.

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The training has brought out the best in my staff, making them more confident and able to deal with customer queries. Not only is it giving the staff a recognised qualification, but it frees up some of my time. The training has been a fantastic way to ensure staff can take over important roles, such as visual merchandising. We have also seen a 1.8% improvement on conversion.

Lisa Lambert

Store Manager, Republic at Meadowhall

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The Source provides nationally recognised retail qualifications, helping to improve the reputation of retail as a career. This may help retailers to recruit, retain and motivate staff. According to Skillsmart Retail, 70% of parents reject retail as a career choice for their children and retail has the lowest proportion of respondents who think it is the best sector to work in.

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During my 20 years as a retail manager I have never before experienced the level of support provided by The Source. The team works closely with retailers and offers a high level of support to businesses and learners. The Source has improved retention levels and increased staff motivation in my store.

Ken Bird

Store Manager, Burton Menswear at Meadowhall

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The Source is helping to ensure that existing and future retail employees have the right skills to meet the major challenges facing the sector. According to Skillsmart Retail, 45% of retailers have hard-to-fill vacancies and there are 29,000 people working in the retail sector in Yorkshire and Humberside without any qualifications.

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There has never been a more important time to train our workforce, regardless of their age. Whilst conditions are tough we need to ensure our region maintains its quality skills and is prepared for new opportunities when the economic upturn starts.

Ann Cadman

Director, The Source

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The Source generated positive publicity worth £20,000, helping to communicate to the local community that Meadowhall can have positive impacts on the area and that it takes its responsibilities seriously. This helps to generate goodwill and loyalty, which in turn can contribute positively to footfall, encouraging shopper spend. Turnover increased by 1% this year, in a challenging economic climate.

This year, The Source provided training to more than 1,500 local people and received over 50,000 visits to the facilities and training, primarily by local people.

185 unemployed people enrolled on the Skills for Jobs Programme. 34% of learners successfully gained employment within six weeks of completion. All participants completing the courses attended interviews with Meadowhall retailers. 384 local people have benefited from Skills for Jobs and Retail Preparation Courses since 2005.



74 new students enrolled on the Schools Programme, developing their retail and customer service skills.

265 learners from 18 schools have participated since 2003, gaining qualifications equivalent to over 800 GCSE grades A* to C. All participating students have completed their courses, with an impressive 66% achieving distinctions. More than 300 learners have also participated in short courses of up to seven weeks.

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It is harder work than at school but I really enjoy it because they treat you more like an adult and I am learning more and gaining qualifications in the process. I have made new friends, learnt a lot and I've even delivered presentations, something I never had the confidence to do before and I actually enjoy it now! My dream job would be managing my own fashion retail store one day and I'm sure that everything I am learning now will help me get there.

Charlotte Walsey
Schools Programme

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421 learners participated in the Work-Based Learning Programme. A new mock retail shop and store window introduced this year allows students to practice window dressing, till work, customer service and stock control in a realistic setting. 1,492 people have participated in the programme since 2004, with 224 completing a full apprenticeship and 333 adults with no previous qualifications gaining a nationally recognised Level 2 award.

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At 71 years of age, there is always more to learn and the NVQ is great. The beauty of the qualification is that it's work based and my Tutor visits me when I am in store. The Tutors are pointing out new ways to do things and I am gaining my first qualification in the process.

Vera Nicholson

a work-based learning student who left school with no qualifications and is now working at Jacques Vert in Meadowhall.

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948 learners from 65 local employers benefited from bespoke training courses. Nearly 50% received an accreditation, in courses including health and safety and security.

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It was the most enjoyable four days I've spent on a training course and I actually feel like I have come away learning something useful, whilst having a great time which doesn't happen very often. You have definitely changed my opinion of training courses being dull and boring!

Clare Bell, Knight Frank LLP

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40 learners with autism participated in the Supported Employment Programme, receiving life-changing work experience. 98% of adults with autism are unemployed.

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