

Training Award

Dawsongroup

Winner profile partnered with



What began as inspiration from a GCSE textbook grew to become an award-winning Business Mastery Programme, open to all Dawsongroup employees. The scheme has proved to be a wise investment, boosting profit and leading to a transformation in company culture



The National Logistics Academy chief executive officer Mark Currie presents the trophy to John Fletcher, MD of Dawsongroup

In 2013, while helping his daughter revise for her GCSE Business Studies exam, Paul Sainthouse, a group MD at Dawsongroup, had a realisation: much of the valuable content in the textbook was likely unknown to many employees across the business.

He brought the textbook to a board meeting, sparking candid conversations among directors – many of whom had never formally studied business. This highlighted a common corporate assumption, that business acumen is acquired on the job, often through trial and error.

Recognising the opportunity, then-group MD Steve Miller collaborated with trainer Gillian Tinney to create a tailored, in-house Business Mastery Programme. The

initiative aimed to break down silos, build commercial awareness and identify future leaders.

What began as a two-day introductory course, launched in 2013, evolved into a three-tiered programme, including intermediate and advanced levels, with ILM endorsement and real business impact.

The courses are interactive and practical, featuring sessions led by senior leaders and culminating in presentations, exams and assignments on real company challenges.

The programme has driven measurable improvements in both turnover and pre-tax profit. It has also helped transform the company culture – encouraging collaboration, cross-group trading and talent mobility.

More than 250 employees have participated, with many progressing to senior roles, including six at director level.

The programme's success also earned it the Princess Royal Training Award in 2024.

What began with a GCSE textbook has become a cornerstone of Dawsongroup's talent strategy – proving that with the right support, rising stars can flourish, and mighty oaks truly do grow from little acorns.

The judges were impressed with this outstanding programme and the fact it was accessible to all employees, whatever part of the business they worked in. It has had a positive culture change on the entire business and judges liked that directors were involved with the training themselves.

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