Working with BAE Systems
Improvement Training

CQM Training & Consultancy has partnered with BAE Systems over the past six years to deliver transformational improvement programmes for its supervisors and managers that drive organisational excellence.

Introduction

BAE Systems' Air sector, with sites in the North West of England, is one of the leaders in advanced aircraft design and manufacture, delivering world-class capabilities, including the renowned Typhoon and Hawk aircraft. With thousands of highly skilled employees across its Warton and Samlesbury sites, the Air sector plays a central role in driving innovation in aerospace technology.

BAE Systems was looking to enhance improvement capability across its Quality function, a requirement which aligned perfectly with CQM's expertise in delivering Lean and Continuous Improvement programmes.

Improvement Programmes

For BAE Systems, CQM Training & Consultancy's training teams delivered three distinct programmes:

- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt (Improvement Practitioner Level 4)
- Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (Improvement Specialist Level 5)
- Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt (Improvement Leader Level 6)

The Green and Black Belt courses were run simultaneously as one programme split into pathways for each standard. In addition, the Master Black Belt programme was carried out through masterclasses which were specifically designed for senior management.

All attendees were Quality professionals with an oversight of manufacturing operations, working in supervisory or managerial roles. This strategic targeting ensured that the programmes directly supported the Quality function's capability to drive excellence across BAE Systems' Air sector.

The programmes were delivered at BAE Systems' purpose-built Samlesbury Academy of Skills and Knowledge, a facility that showcases the company's commitment to developing talent and skills.

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Navigating Challenges with Innovation

CQM's trainers swiftly adapted their delivery methodology to online formats, utilising secure laptops to maintain the confidentiality and security requirements essential for BAE Systems' sensitive work environment.

The unique pathway structure for Green and Black Belts delivered unexpected benefits beyond the original scope.

By bringing together learners from different parts of the business, the programmes encouraged networking and collaboration that encouraged sharing of knowledge and expertise and has created a more cohesive improvement culture.

Significantly, the trainers mapped all programmes across BAE Systems' core values of Trusted, Innovative and Bold, ensuring that skills development aligned with organisational culture and strategic objectives.

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Measurable Impact and Cultural Transformation

Employees undertaking the programmes worked on projects, which have focused primarily on reducing manufacturing snagging and creating efficiency improvements. Given that Quality teams in the cohorts had close contact with manufacturing operations, effective communication became crucial for implementing and controlling the changes successfully.These continuous improvement programmes have also enhanced skills to enable employees to progress within their careers – which is particularly valuable in an organisation like BAE Systems, which encourages promotion from within.

The results have been significant in directly addressing BAE Systems' objectives. Importantly this has encouraged a mindset change amongst employees, empowering them with tools to make and embrace change effectively.

In addition, the programmes have encouraged collaboration between Quality teams and manufacturing departments, breaking down traditional silos and creating more integrated working relationships.

Some of the learners on these programmes were involved in building newer airframes, such as the F35 Lightning II, of which BAE Systems is a tier 1 partner and produces the rear fuselage, as well as the development of Tempest, which is now part of the joint UK, Italy and Japan GCAP 6th Generation Fighter.

> “BAE Systems is committed to continuous improvement in Quality and these recent programmes are testament to just what can be achieved when an organisation invests in its people. The results from these expertly delivered continuous improvement programmes extend far beyond individual skill development to create lasting organisational transformation and competitive advantage.”
>
> **Andy Cheshire, Managing Director at CQM Training & Consultancy**

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Champions of Change

The success of these programmes owes much to key individuals who championed the initiative. Andy Maher, then BAE Systems' Air Quality Director, was instrumental in the initial setup and was a strong advocate for the programme's impact. Corinne Boardman, Senior Capability Engineer, provided strong support throughout various challenges, ensuring learners had everything they needed to stay on track.

Craig Colthart continued this work, supporting many learners and maintaining programme momentum as organisational roles evolved

Close Collaboration

CQM Training & Consultancy's trainers worked closely with BAE Systems' teams to navigate organisational change, ensuring appropriate learner release and providing ongoing support that extended beyond formal programme completion.

Discover How our Apprenticeships Can Support Your Organisation

Contact Us Today