

# Case Study

## Houlder Ltd

semta

The Sector Skills Council  
for Science, Engineering and  
Manufacturing Technologies



## Developing Women's potential

Semta's Women and Work programme has helped Houlder Ltd to build a strong team of motivated women and use their talents to the full to take the business forward.

Houlder Ltd is a leading independent engineering design consultancy employing 58 members of staff and has a number of sites including London, Portsmouth, Aberdeen, Bristol and Tyneside. Established in 1987 Houlder Ltd specialises in the defense, marine and offshore markets and provides expertise in naval architecture, engineering and marine services. In 2008 the company made a commitment to introduce a performance management system and training needs analysis. Semta's Women & Work initiative met its needs well.

The Semta Women and Work programme is specifically designed to help both individuals and businesses in the Science and Engineering Sectors to support skills development to realise the potential of their female staff. Women attend an initial Career Development Planning workshop, with further workshops and training courses available to them. Employers can access up to £400 per individual towards the cost of

this training, subject to £100 company cash match.

Houlder discovered the benefits as a number of its women completed the Semta programme with positive results. "The Semta programme has benefited Houlder as a business," says HR Manager, Margot Freeman. **"It has motivated employees and helped to build a cohesive team amongst the minority female group within the company, drawing in staff from regional offices. This has improved communications. In one case it has helped a career move from administration into finance as part of the company's succession planning process. We are hopeful that this initiative will help with the longer-term retention of staff too."** Also "Semta's Women and Work programme enabled some new and some long-serving staff to spend time thinking about their career objectives and training opportunities available to them to develop their existing skills."



“I am a working mum and took a career break, I would recommend the Semta programme not only to working mums but also to young girls when choosing their profession and career path. I found the Training and Development Needs and Identification Workshop particularly helpful. I have more enthusiasm to continue my professional development and am more confident of reaching my maximum potential,” says Ema.

Ema Muk-Pavic  
Senior Naval Architect

### Empowering women

Among the company's enthusiastic Women and Work participants is Senior Naval Architect, Ema Muk-Pavic, whose career is on the up since she completed the programme after a career break. She participated in a number of development planning workshops and coaching sessions. The initial 'Training and Development Needs Identification' workshop explored Ema's career, looking at where she is now and where she would like to be and the issues she has faced. From this a career development plan was produced. **“It was a very positive, encouraging and constructive workshop for making a realistic plan and setting goals for development,”** says Ema.

The coaching sessions Ema took part in were 'Emotions and Behaviours at Work' (sub-titled 'Understand the Impact, Reach Your Full Potential') and

'Positive and Confident Behaviour.' She found them of real value in helping her to focus on emotional intelligence to improve relationships and interactions in the workplace and change her outlook.

In particular the coaching helped Ema to:

- ▶ Think about what her next job might be
- ▶ Request a change of role
- ▶ Focus on how she was perceived
- ▶ Look at strategies to manage stress
- ▶ Develop influencing skills

### How to access funding

Employers can tap in to funding from the Semta Women and Work scheme to support and develop female employees. Funding is also available to support any level of training identified and can be delivered by the company's own provider of choice.

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