

Case Study

HMP Onley
Business in the Community
UK Prison

Ricoh community support helps HMP Onley boost prisoner employment opportunities



Faced with high reoffending rates, HMP Onley reached out to the local business community for help. One company that stepped forward was Ricoh and it has put in place a series of initiatives to improve prisoner

employability. One programme has been so successful that prisoners are staying at Onley rather than moving to open conditions prior to release, so they can continue the Ricoh-sponsored training.

Executive summary

Name: HMP Onley
Location: Rugby, Warwickshire
Size: Operational Capacity - 742
Activity: UK Prison

Challenges

- Tackle high rate of prisoner reoffending
- Improve post-prison employment opportunities

Solution

- Ricoh prison support programme
- Ricoh Academy print industry training
- Employability Workshops
- In-prison, professional-class print centre

Benefits

- Ricoh training valued above move to open prison
- Increases prisoner employment prospects
- Provides realistic, workplace training and expertise
- 22 prisoners complete Ricoh Academy course in 1st year
- Benefits to Ricoh:
 - Enhances and expands employee experience
 - Opens up new, cost-effective recruitment channel
 - Builds conscientious, trustworthy brand value

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges and aims for the UK Prison Service is reducing reoffending rates and helping people build purposeful and constructive lives after they leave prison.

The UK prison population is around 82,000 compared to an operating capacity of about 85,000. But there is an average of 29.4 percent of prisoners that reoffend within a year. Only 1:4 prisoners have a job to go to when released. In contrast, studies show that good employment opportunities can reduce reoffending significantly.*

HMP Onley, a category C prison in Warwickshire, is one UK prison that has pioneered several initiatives to help prisoners prepare for life after release. In fact, HMP Onley is regarded as a pioneer of prisoner education. It was one of a handful of institutions visited by Dame Sally Coates in a review - sponsored by the Ministry of Justice - into the state of education in prisons. In particular, HMP Onley has been a leader in reaching out to local business communities for support.

Paul Birbeck, Industries Manager, HMP Onley, says, "The more we can marry training and delivery with external partners, the more we can get prisoners ready for release. Prisons can be quite insular and often lack real-world experience. With a criminal record, our prisoners are already at a disadvantage. But if we can give them specific skills and harness business community expertise and knowledge about what employers are looking for in recruitment and training, we can try to deliver that and give prisoners the best chance of employment after release."

HMP Onley ran several 'meet the community' events and when Ricoh attended one of these it was the start of a significant and mutually beneficial partnership.



* Source: Ministry of Justice/Prison Reform Trust.

Solution

As part of the Business in the Community initiative - an HRH The Prince of Wales charity - Ricoh is working with HMP Onley to deliver several employment improvement programmes. These include Employability Workshops, the Ricoh Training Academy, and deployment of a fully operational Ricoh Production Print facility inside the prison, staffed by prisoners.

The Employability Workshops involve eight Ricoh employees from different areas of the business spending a day with prisoners to help make them work-ready. This includes developing a better understanding of what employers want and expect from prospective staff, as well as presentation and interview techniques, and how to write a CV. The workshops also help prisoners master basic levels of English and Maths required in the workplace.

The Ricoh Production Print facility is the main training environment for the Ricoh Academy. It offers prisoners a full-time, four-month course that gives them the training and skills they need to work in the print industry. The course also helps prisoners with associated skills such as how to behave in the workplace environment, and customer interaction and service skills.

As well as a training centre, the print room also functions as a commercial business providing professional print services to the prison as well as for local community organisations like charities and churches. It even operates as an overflow resource for the professional print services Ricoh provides to its corporate customers. The print room is fitted out with Ricoh digital print technology and finishing equipment. Almost all of the prison's commercial printing needs are handled by the print centre.

The partnership with HMP Onley was Ricoh's first engagement with the prison community and the company is now working with seven other prisons. Also, Ricoh is now a member of the Reducing Reoffending Forum, a group of businesses and organisations helping to shape Government policy on prisons and reoffending.

Benefits

Through its partnership with Ricoh and other businesses, HMP Onley is starting to have a significant impact on improving employment prospects for its prisoners. It is providing them with realistic, workplace training and expertise delivered by business people and organisations from the world of work.

Birbeck says, "The best way to describe the impact Ricoh is having, is how much prisoners themselves value it. As part of the rehabilitation process, prisoners go from HMP Onley to

continued overleaf

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an open prison where the regime is much freer and relaxed. Since introducing the Ricoh programme, prisoners have started to delay moving to open prison before they have completed the Ricoh Academy course. In my experience, that is very unusual.”

Although Ricoh has only been working with HMP Onley for a year, around 22 prisoners have completed the Academy course and Ricoh has facilitated three Release on Temporary Licence placements.

As well as planning to offer work in its own organisation, Ricoh is also able to connect prisoners to its national network of business partners for further employment opportunities.

One of the outcomes of the partnership between Ricoh and the prison is a mentoring and communication initiative, first tried out at HMP Onley. Now it is being developed by the Ministry of Justice for other prisons. Ricoh employees go into HMP Onley and team up with an inmate for a day to work on specific tasks or jobs with the aim of sharing experiences and knowledge and improving communication.

Not only has the Ricoh print room provided a realistic work environment for prisoners it is also helping to reduce costs and improve print services for the prison. For

example, booklets for prison wing administration used to be printed on a small desktop printer then bound by hand which took three days a week. Doing this in the Ricoh print room is faster, costs less and frees staff to do more valuable and useful work around the prison.

While Ricoh support is a significant benefit to HMP Onley and its prisoners, Ricoh also benefits. It is a source of new employees that bring in fresh, new ideas and perspectives and is a cost-effective recruitment route. For Ricoh employees it is a rich and unique opportunity to experience new environments and helps to add diversity to their roles. The work at HMP Onley also forms a significant part of Ricoh's extensive corporate responsibility activity and helps develop the Ricoh brand as trustworthy and conscientious.

“The partnership with Ricoh and the support it gives to prisoners is hugely important. HMP Onley needs the support of local communities, companies, and families, as well as the will of prisoners themselves to change their lives,” says Birbeck.

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh digital production print technology

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