

Case Study

SCOTLAND
FOOD & DRINK
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Devro plc: think about risk and develop your people

As a food business, how do you stay ahead of the game? You anticipate what could go wrong (and right) and plan for it. You also invest in people's training and development.

"We live in a rapidly changing world of challenges and opportunities, you need to understand your business to identify the threats and assess their relevance to you and your customers, whatever your size. More importantly, you need to have a process and trained resources in place to prepare your business at all levels for whatever may come your way. Regularly training your people and exposing them to potential challenges is key to managing problems. Preparing for the possible helps you better manage the challenges of tomorrow."

Dr Gary Stephenson
Global Regulatory and External Affairs Director



Devro supplies casings for sausages and other meat products. Headquartered in Scotland, we have manufacturing sites in six countries and sell in over 100 different markets.

Don't be caught out

As a business working with animal-based products, operating and selling internationally, resilience and risk are major issues for us. It comes down to two key points: **predictability** and **adaptability**.

Predictability means looking outside for potential threats that could affect our business. It could be an animal health issue, a human pandemic, a political event such as Brexit, or environmental challenges such as water or plastic use.

For example, even though Covid-19 was new, the threat posed by animal or human disease outbreaks is *not* new – think of anything from BSE or Foot and Mouth Disease in livestock to SARS in humans. They all had huge impacts on businesses.



That's where the **adaptability** element comes in:

- we look for threats and work how ways to deal with them
- we have business continuity plans and teams for the business and our individual sites

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- we run scenario planning exercises, build skills on that and share lessons

Your people are your future

Another way we look after Devro plc's future (and present) is to develop our people. We train people, giving them the opportunity to upskill, go into seconded or new roles, and understand the wider business.

This investment helps us recruit talent, develop it, retain it, take care of our succession planning and stay competitive. We'd recommend it to every business.

Solving skills shortages: apprenticeships

A particular recruitment challenge for us is STEM skills and engineers, a common issue in the food industry. Since we need good engineers to run and improve our manufacturing equipment, we train them ourselves through our apprenticeship scheme. It's an investment in our future.

- At any time, we have between 4 and 10 **Modern Apprentices** training through the East Kilbride Group Training Association (EKGTA), with a strong likelihood they'll be offered a full-time role.

- They learn on the job and at college, and do a **meaningful job** from day one.
- All our apprentices have the opportunity to go further. They are mapped on **our talent scheme** and can progress into management positions.

Upskilling at all career stages

We also train all our staff – not just in the early career stages – to develop their technical knowledge and skills, through:

- on the job training and external training
- our internal Devro Academy, with courses to help people understand what Devro does and how we do it. It helps them understand how other parts of the business work, so they can work effectively with other teams and progress

It's not just technical skills we develop: we want people who can manage risk, solve problems, work in a team, communicate well, and have good commercial skills.

This investment in people, apprenticeships and skills will help Devro stay ahead of the game. If you support your staff to thrive, you help your business to thrive.