



Ovenu – for life after the Services

Ovenu Franchise Ltd (see page 74) is an oven valeting operation with nearly 100 franchises operating across the UK and an estimated turnover of over £3 million this year. At the end of 2003 the company was accepted as a full member of the British Franchise Association, the industry organisation that sets standards and a code of conduct from its members.

Rik Hellewell, founder and managing director of Ovenu Franchise Ltd, says that: 'The Ovenu concept was first tested in 1994 when I set up our pilot operation. The business was immediately so successful that I decided to launch it across the UK by franchising; hence, Ovenu Franchising Ltd was formed in 1999. Becoming an Ovenu franchisee is fast becoming a very lucrative employment option for people from all walks of life.' The company includes several former members of The Services, such as Derek

Lancaster in Darlington and Steve Angell in Staffordshire.

'I am totally committed to the success of our franchisees. I have often found that people who are either currently or previously employed in the Armed Forces show a great sense of pride and dedication in their work. This, in my mind, makes them eminently suitable as Ovenu franchisees.'



Darlington – Ex-Army Chef Derek Lancaster who operates his franchise out of Darlington.

Rail engineering foundation degree

Network Rail (see pages 26, 79 & 84), the not-for-dividend company in charge of Britain's rail infrastructure is trying to recruit former Service men and women. They are being urged to apply for places at Sheffield Hallam University to study for the foundation degree in railway engineering.

'The mix of fieldwork, discipline and use of transferable skills on this course makes it an ideal choice for ex-military personnel,' explains Nigel Ward, professional development manager at Network Rail. As a former Royal Marine, he is certainly qualified to provide an insight. 'The qualities that former Service men and women can bring to Network Rail, those of discipline, maturity and dedication, are exactly the ones we are seeking in the engineers we need to rebuild the railway of the 21st century.'

The foundation degree at Sheffield Hallam University has been devised in co-operation with rail companies and provides an opportunity for

those wishing to retrain for a career in the industry. The first year of the course teaches basic engineering disciplines whilst the second allows for specialisation, either in signal engineering, civil and track engineering or electrical and mechanical engineering. Local work placements are offered with a pro-rata salary of £13,000. Bursaries for 40 places are provided each year by Network Rail covering student fees.



MET-UK offers supported employment for Service leavers



National gas and plumbing training provider, MET-UK (see page 33) has recently added to its retraining offer to Service leavers. As well as their training modules, the company promises to 'work to secure employment for every newly qualified CORGI gas fitter and plumber. MET-UK's Faye Croxford says: 'People don't retrain just to learn a new skill. Over the past few years working with Service leavers we have realised that the training is not the most important thing, the work placement and support leading to employment is.'

Their supported employment service helps to manage the transition from the Forces to paid employment with reputable gas and plumbing firms. As part of the package, 'newly qualified engineers will be offered paid employment with a 12-month training plan. Service leavers can gain access to over £2,500 of free additional training, free health care and ongoing technical/business support.'

Sergeant Paul Smith recently started his supported employment with national employer Gas Force, and reports: 'I left the Forces from a non-technical background and retrained. The most important part of retraining is the work placement.'

Opportunities are available in the following areas:

Bedfordshire	Lincolnshire
Blackpool	London
Buckinghamshire	Middlesex
Cleveland	Newcastle
Cornwall	Norfolk
Derbyshire	North Lanarcshire
Devon	Stafford
Essex	Suffolk
Gloucestershire	Tyne & Wear
Gwent	Wiltshire
Gwynedd	Wirral
Hampshire	Worcestershire
Hertfordshire	Yorkshire
Kent	

For more information, call Michael Ord or Faye Croxford on 01709 709 525, e-mail at csr@met-uk.com or visit the website at www.met-uk.com

