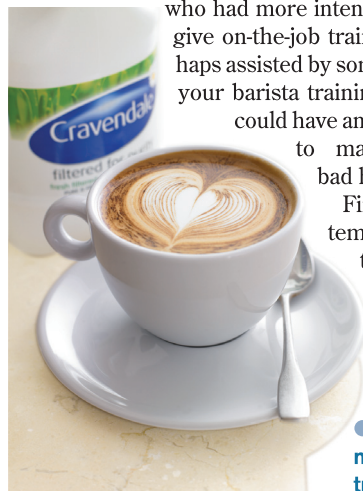


for 'bartender', the original experts on the espresso machine. People often assume it will take months to train a barista. But training traditional barista skills should not take a great deal of effort. A one-day course for your key staff should provide the main skills required, backed up with a half-day of training for more casual users.

Key staff will need to know how to calibrate the machine and grinder to produce great espresso – as most poor coffee in this country stems from badly calibrated equipment – although all staff will need the straightforward steps to making espresso and foaming milk. Make sure you gain professional training, though; an hour of training from the engineer who installs the machine, or a member of your team who claims to have "used one before" may just generate bad habits that will be hard to shift. Some of the main coffee roasters and machine manufacturers can now offer professional training, or seek advice from independent trainers. Good trainers should also advise you on speed of service, maintaining your equipment and appropriate menu items, as well as providing training notes that future staff can utilise.

A common fear is that your staff turnover may suggest that any training done will be a waste. The skills involved in preparing quality coffee can add to job satisfaction, particularly with the addition of skills like latte art (the patterns poured with the milk on the coffee), and can help with staff retention. But when staff do leave, you will need a system for training new starters. Build in the required barista skills into your induction programme for new starters. Your key staff,



who had more intensive training, should be able to give on-the-job training for the new starters, perhaps assisted by some training notes provided from your barista training company. Once a year, you could have another day of structured training to maintain skills and iron out bad habits.

Finally, set up a coffee 'audit' system, which checks that all your team are producing drinks to the required standard. This could be done formally or run as a competition for more fun and encouragement.

● Paul Meikle-Janney is managing director of barista trainers Coffee Community

## Training options

It can cost anything from between £300 to £500 per day (plus VAT and expenses) to hire a trainer for a day, who could train your whole team. Alternatively, a course for an individual will cost around £125 to £150 per day. People should look at the training company's track record, facilities and support materials to get full value, as the cheapest is not always the best.

Once the basic skills have been adopted, you may wish to extend the training and gain a deeper knowledge of the varieties of coffee available and perhaps teach your team latte art (the patterns poured with the milk on the coffee).

It is also possible to gain formal qualifications in barista skills now. Trade organisation the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe ([www.scae.com](http://www.scae.com)) runs barista certification, and City & Guilds and NCFE have created VRQ qualifications in barista skills that can be taken at college.

**Coffee Community:** [www.coffeecommunity.co.uk](http://www.coffeecommunity.co.uk)  
**The London School of Coffee:** [www.londonschoolofcoffee.com](http://www.londonschoolofcoffee.com)  
**Speciality Coffee Association of Europe:** [www.scae.com](http://www.scae.com)  
**Absolute coffee:** [www.absolutecoffee.co.uk](http://www.absolutecoffee.co.uk)

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