

Hose Rhodes and Dickson

Isle of Wight based Hose Rhodes and Dickson (HRD) comprises 3 companies focussing on residential property sales, residential & holiday lets and financial services. It provides a full service for people wanting to change house, buy a business or second home or make a staged move to the island.

The initial contact with The Isle of Wight College came via a brief conversation about NVQs and Train to Gain which the Head of Workforce Development (HoWD) had with the Director of HRD Lettings. This resulted in an invitation in November 2007 for the HoWD and relevant Customer Liaison Officer (CLO) to discuss training with the Senior Partner of the company, the Lettings Director and a Partner of Residential Sales. At this meeting a variety of issues were discussed including company ethos, structure, roles, industry trends, training needs, NVQs and sources of funding (particularly LSC and ESF).

The following afternoon, the CLO met with the College trainer specialising in Customer Care training and a training proposal was designed and costed and sent to HRD within 5 working days. The CLO followed this with a telephone call to the Senior Partner and a meeting was arranged so that the company could meet the trainer and further refine the proposal.

Another draft of the training proposal followed together with a recosting based on staff attending and drawing on different sources of funding. Having agreed the content, delegates and price, the training manual for the first module was written and talked through with the two Directors. Having established the format, the rest of the material was developed by the trainer.

The training, *Customer Care Refresher Programme*, was delivered to all 50 staff of the company including all Partners and Directors over a period of one month in the Spring of 2008. Staff were trained in groups of between 11 and 14 delegates, off site at the College and undertook 12 hours training covering Customer & Service Excellence, Successful Listening, Dealing with Specific Situations and Successful Communication.

All delegates completed course evaluation sheets and summaries of the flip charts produced during the training were compiled for review by the Senior Management Team.

One week afterwards, the CLO and trainer debriefed the Senior Partner by reviewing issues raised during the training and future areas for development in individual members of staff. It was agreed that a programme of individual coaching of partners would improve the embedding of the customer care programme. This was subsequently arranged for the early summer with each Director and Partner receiving between 4 and 6 hours coaching from the College trainer.

Another review identified the possibility of providing staff with the opportunity to undertake NVQ in the Sales of Residential Property and the trainer undertook a week's continuing professional development in one of the HRD branches in order to update her vocational competence. Funding under Train to Gain particularly with potential new flexibilities is viewed as a funding route starting January 2009.

