



NEWS RELEASE

FAO: BUSINESS REPORTER

Contact Centre Forum supports boom industry

Around forty managers and team leaders from call centres across the region attended the Lancashire and Cumbria Contact Centre Forum meeting at Lancashire Ambulance Headquarters last week.

The Forum was launched by the University of Central Lancashire to promote and support what is fast becoming one of the boom industries of the north west. Members hope it will enable them more easily to discuss current issues, share best practice and update themselves on the latest industry developments.

Speakers at the first meeting included Geoff Simms, Managing Director of Hays Personnel, who spoke about recruitment and retention issues within the industry, and Bob Hale from the University of Central Lancashire's Business School, who announced the launch of a new range of qualifications in Contact Centre Management.

The new courses have been developed with an advisory group drawn from contact centre employers in the region and they are unique in being tailored to meet the particular needs of the industry. Clare Short from Preston College also provided an overview of the NVQ qualifications the College offers for Call Centre staff.

"Forum members agree that the one major consideration for Contact Centres wanting to retain the best staff is a career development pathway providing training and advancement," says Bob Hale. "We're sure that these new courses will help us to achieve this."

-more follows-

-page 2 of 2-

On the need for the Forum, he said: "Managing customer relationships is going to be the key to the survival and growth of organisations and with customers now expecting round-the-clock service, more and more companies are looking to contact centres to provide this. It's estimated that the industry employs 38,000 people in East and West Lancashire alone and we hope the Forum will contribute to its continuing success and future development as a major employer in the region."

Members of the forum include the University, Lancashire County Council, United Utilities, Airtours, Preston College, RMS, Inward Investment Cumbria and the Lancashire Ambulance Service. Plans for the future include an annual awards dinner to celebrate the best in management and operation of centres in the region.

The next meeting of the Forum will be on Thursday 23rd May. Contact Shirley Russo on 0800 195 0055 or email smrusso@uclan.ac.uk for details.

-ends-

15 May 2002
nr052kjf

For further details, please contact Bob Hale or Shirley Russo at the Lancashire Business School on 0800 195 0055, email smrusso@uclan.ac.uk.