Stonegate toasts innkeeping prize

The UK pub and bar operator Stonegate Pub Company won the prize for best managed company for training at the British Institute of Innkeeping’s national industry training awards.

The company’s training and development program, named Albert’s Theory of Progression, enables employees to map their progress to the top. Such is the popularity of the modules that each year they are oversubscribed. The 13,000-employee business invests 6.7 percent of turnover in training.

In the latest employee-engagement survey at the 665-pub chain, nine out of ten managers said they would recommend Stonegate as a place to work.

Around 100 of the company’s deputy managers who had been appointed to their first pub through the aspirations career-development module visited the House of Commons and met their local MPs in celebration of their appointment and the place their pub plays in their local communities.

Ian Payne, company chairman, was recognized for championing the development of his people and teams throughout his career as he progressed through companies such as Bass, Ladbrokes and Hilton. Since founding Laurel Pub Company, Town & City Pub Company and more recently Stonegate Pub Company, Ian Payne has advocated the development of clear career paths for all employees.

The British Institute of Innkeeping Chief Executive, Mike Clist, said: “The most successful individuals and businesses in the licensed retail market today are those that invest in, support and champion their people. I am also delighted to be able to recognize the personal contribution made by Ian Payne in advancing the standard and quality of training for our whole industry, demonstrating what it can do for a business to have a leader who truly values investment in people and treats team members – even those just starting out – as potential business leaders of the future.”

Redrow recognized for commitment to learning and development

The UK house-builder Redrow has won the quality mark from the British Institute for Learning and Development (BiLD), which reviews training and development policies and processes and assesses them against a 12-point checklist.

Redrow delivers more than 5,000 training days a year at its purpose-built training centers in Tamworth, Staffordshire, and Colindale, London. More than 15 percent of staff are trainees.

Karen Jones, HR Director, said: “We strongly believe in developing talent, from our award-winning apprentice and graduate schemes through to succession planning, to identify our future leaders at all levels of the business. Our training looks to provide individuals with the skills and opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. It is these efforts which lead to a number of our director appointments coming through internal promotions, many of whom started at Redrow on one of our trainee schemes. Receiving the quality mark from the BiLD underlines that our learning and development opportunities are second to none. The award affirms that we are delivering training in line with our business needs, as well as helping to differentiate our organization from competitors who do not possess such a quality-assurance award.”

Rich Wootten, BiLD Business Manager, said: “It is clear that Redrow has a strong culture of development and invests in its staff to help them to develop and progress, taking pride in the quality and skills of the workforce. The quality-mark award is a guarantee of our confidence in the quality, credibility and good practice of Redrow’s training opportunities, and is something that all Redrow employees should be proud of.”
Global law firm develops its junior lawyers’ skills

The leadership communications specialist CloudQast has run a ten-day training program for a global law firm – the 11th such program delivered for the firm.

It involves CloudQast Directors Lindsey Mack and Damian Gaskin casting and delivering a series of legal role-plays for junior members of the firm. CloudQast’s Lindsey Mack explained: “All the ‘clients’ with whom they deal are simulated and the delegates are entirely on their own but, of course, in a completely commercially safe environment.”

The program focuses on scenarios relevant to the firm’s actual work for its clients. It seeks to enhance the junior lawyers’ ability to deal effectively and productively with influential people and organizations facing complex legal challenges.

“One benefit of using immersive role play in this way is that, once a role play is ended, the ‘clients’ come out of character to give the delegates detailed feedback on how they felt that things went,” said Lindsey Mack. “CloudQast also films the sessions to help in analyzing the delegates’ performance. By the end of the program, these junior lawyers have a much better idea of what clients really care about. The delegates also gain some valuable insights into their own skill levels as well as best practice and, of course, they develop their self-awareness.”

Damian Gaskin commented: “The program – one of the range of consultancy services that CloudQast offers – contributes to achieving our client’s aim of being exceptional and passionate about helping its clients to achieve their goals, however ambitious those are.”

Raytheon offers the US Army next-generation training

Raytheon Company has submitted its proposal for the US Army’s next-generation, global training-support program.

The firm is offering InSITE, its mobile-enabled management-information system. The Army’s training aids, devices, simulations and simulators-maintenance program (ATMP) calls for training support and sustainment services for more than 320,000 Army training devices and more than 90 digital ranges around the world. The goal is to help to ensure mission-readiness.

ATMP is a competitive follow-on to the US Army war-fighter focus program. Awarded to Raytheon in 2007, it involved similar training and logistics work performed globally at more than 500 sites. Raytheon managed training support for almost every soldier around the world and believes that it saved the Army more than $400 million in training-sustainment costs over eight years.

“Raytheon brings significant experience in maintaining and sustaining the US Army’s combat training centers, Army training devices and ranges to help to drive and enable readiness,” said Pete Vangjel, Vice-President of Raytheon’s Global Training Solutions business.

Raytheon’s InSITE delivers advanced analytics, customizable user interfaces, dashboards and data integrity to standard Army mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets. Raytheon invested $6.5 million to develop InSITE specifically for ATMP.

The system transforms diverse, multi-year and multiple-device maintenance and program data into decision-ready, actionable information. Users can pull in and access maintenance, contracts, finance, supply chain and other systems information from anywhere in the world, in near real-time, round the clock, every day of the year.

The Raytheon project team consists of CSRA, General Dynamics and Leidos, plus 17 small, hub-zone businesses.

Tata teams up on insurance-training program

Tata American International Group (AIG) General Insurance Company has signed a memorandum of understanding with Manipal Global Education Services (MaGE) to offer a customized general insurance-training program for participants at the Manipal Academy of Banking and Insurance in Bangalore, India.
The program is a customized residential one-year full-time training program comprising four months on-campus residential training and two months of internship followed by six months of on-the-job training at a Tata AIG General Insurance branch. It is designed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge of general insurance and to enhance their competency and business-development skills.

The program will start later this spring, in Bangalore. On the successful completion, students will be awarded a postgraduate diploma in general insurance and will be offered employment at Tata AIG General Insurance.

Neelesh Garg, Tata AIG General Insurance Chief Executive and Managing Director, said: “Given that we are in the business of risk, domain expertise plays a very important role at every level of the business. People who complete the course will have the expertise to take on the day-to-day challenges of the insurance business.”

Mr S Vaitheeswaran, MaGE Managing Director and Chief Executive, said: “MaGE aims to provide quality education, training and skills with strong industry connect and this program with Tata AIG General Insurance reflects that deep interest and commitment.”

Tata AIG General Insurance is a joint venture between the Tata Group and the AIG. It has a workforce of around 3,000 in 152 branches across India.

Training program boosts efficiency at Western Union

Western Union, a worldwide payment-services company, is using new software to enable employee self-development and engagement, as well as to focus on data-driven talent initiatives.

With software specialist Cornerstone, the company has built a learning and development program that not only links directly to business outcomes, but also has created efficiencies and trimmed costs.

Before teaming up with Cornerstone, Western Union was not measuring results from its learning and development programs, there was no direct link between talent initiatives and business objectives, and the training experience was not consistent across departments and geographic regions.

In 2012, Western Union signed with Cornerstone to use its unified talent-management platform, including solutions for learning and development, workplace collaboration, performance management and succession planning. This has helped Western Union to:

■ Create a consistent employee experience across 59 countries. Before Cornerstone, Western Union relied on two different learning-management systems, which was not optimal. Today, all 10,000 employees can access the same content from anywhere in the world, at any time. By using a unified platform, Western Union has not only reduced costs but also improved the learner experience and can now effectively measure the success of its programs, identify and address skill gaps and instantly assess the capabilities of its workforce.

■ Increase engagement and career mobility with a dynamic and blended approach to learning and development. With Cornerstone, Western Union has created a self-directed learning system with modern, relevant training that includes gamification as well as video, social, online and micro-learning content, to meet the needs of today’s employees. Cornerstone’s suite of products has enabled Western Union employees to drive their own professional development and has encouraged career mobility throughout the organization.

■ Make data-driven talent decisions that link back to business objectives. Previously, Western Union’s dual learning systems made it difficult to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of its talent initiatives. With accurate and real-time reporting, Western Union can now easily make important course corrections, invest more in programs that drive business results and strategically plan for the future.
**Warburtons puts the accent on sustainability**

Students at the Lancaster University Management School had a chance to learn about the practical side of sustainability when Michael McDermott, corporate sustainability manager at Warburtons bakery, shared his insights.

One aim of the family firm, which goes back five generations, is to continue to approach decisions today with future generations in mind, he explained.

He talked about the importance of intrapreneurship in getting staff to engage with sustainability. He also outlined some of the initiatives undertaken at Warburtons. They include school visits in which staff go out to teach children about health and well-being, and commitments to reduce food waste and greenhouse gases. He went on to expand on the different aspects of the firm’s sustainability strategy, which encompasses both environmental and social aspects.

“We employ a certain sort of person at Warburtons,” said Michael McDermott, explaining how its interview process focuses on a candidate’s values. “It isn’t telling people how to do it. It isn’t pushing; it’s pulling people along with you.”

Michael McDermott was joined by Executive Director Brett Warburton, who added that staff stay with Warburtons for a long time. “When you come to Warburtons you realize the business thrives on their values,” he said. “They like to work for an organization that shares their values as individuals. We see ourselves as one big family.”

Brett Warburton concluded that without the right people, with the right values, a strategy will not succeed.

Lecturer Dr Alison Stowell said: “Gaining insight into Warburtons 140-year history, the company’s values and commitment to a sustainable future was truly inspiring.”

**GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) helps small firms to develop**

Health-care Company GSK has signed up to a scheme that aims to boost the growth of small firms in north-east England.

GSK has joined captured, a program in which experienced people from large organizations help small companies to develop their business.

Run by Newcastle University Business School, the scheme has received the backing of some of the region’s largest companies. They include technology specialist Sage, engineering giant Siemens and automotive-component supplier Calsonic Kansei.

GSK is the latest big company to sign up and three of its most experienced staff are helping a range of small firms from the north-east.

Quality Director Simon Forsyth is supporting Elizabeth Scott, the owner-manager of Durham-based counseling and life-coaching specialist Rainbows End Coaching. As well as receiving regular, ongoing advice from Simon Forsyth, Elizabeth Scott has been on site at GSK to learn about the company’s processes and discover how they could be applied to her coaching.

Wear Valley Recruitment is benefiting from the advice of GSK’s HR Business Lead Polly Lerner, who has helped the Bishop Auckland-based company to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business. Polly Lerner has also helped Wear Valley in its attempts to review and refine its business strategy for the next three years.

The third GSK staff member to get involved in captured is Technical Director Brendan Fish, who is supporting Jo Long as she seeks to develop her consultancy firm. Jo Long Consulting offers a personalized mentoring service for women who have returned to their corporate roles following time out to raise a family or recover from illness. Brendan Fish is helping her to hone and refine her business strategy and find a way of juggling workloads with her busy family life.

While GSK has been instrumental in the development of these small firms, it is also reaping the benefits of being involved in captured.
Polly Lerner said: “The program has given us the chance to get out of the daily routine and think and reflect, both on the efficacy of GSK’s business processes and on the skills and experience gained through working in a different environment. There are significant advantages in learning how small businesses work and behave and then seeing how these traits can be applied back in our workplace.”

Captured gives small firms the opportunity to spend time developing their business with support from experienced managers from larger private-sector organizations. It was launched after the Newcastle University Business School secured funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to pilot the project in the north-east.

Dr Fiona Whitehurst, of the Newcastle University Business School, said: “Captured acts as a catalyst for small-business owners to develop their leadership and entrepreneurial skills. The idea behind the program is to give small firms the tools and confidence to develop new, profitable ways of growing their business. This will enable them to create jobs and wealth for the local economy.”

Captured is open to firms with fewer than 20 employees and aims to address the particular issues faced by small businesses at critical points in their development. After an initial workshop with other small firms, in which aims and expectations are mapped out, the small firm works with an experienced manager from a large organization to identify opportunities, challenges and barriers to business growth.

**Report calls graduate premium into question**

Successive governments’ preoccupation over the last 30 or more years with getting more young people through university is no longer justified given the employment outcomes for many graduates and the associated costs involved, according to a report by the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development.

It finds that, for a wide range of occupations which have seen significant increases in graduate rates over the last 35 years, alternative vocational routes into employment are both possible and less costly, with a smaller proportion of this lower cost falling on the learner.

The report is published at a time when the average student is leaving university with £44,000 of debt and, by the government’s estimates, 45 percent of the value of student loans will not be repaid. The report calls into question the continued focus on the graduate premium, with previous CIPD research showing that more than half of graduates were working in non-graduate jobs after they left university.

The CIPD’s research considers 29 occupations, which together account for nearly 30 percent of employment in the UK and over 30 percent of the work performed by graduates currently. It shows that, for many of these jobs, while the numbers of graduates increased sharply between 1979 and 2014, in many instances the level of skill required to do the job did not appreciably change.

The report also suggests that, for too long, employers have been recruiting graduates into many roles that do not use this level of qualification. Employers need to open up recruitment to more non-graduates, while also working to develop more of the roles that do require graduate skills.

The report finds that:

- 35 percent of new bank and post-office clerks are now graduates, compared with 1979 when just 3.5 percent of bank and post-office clerks held degrees;
- 42.9 percent of police officers at the rank of sergeant and below entering the police force now hold degrees, compared with 1979 when less than 2 percent of police officers of similar rank were graduates;
- 41 percent of new recruits in property, housing and estate management are graduates, compared with 3.6 percent in 1979; and
- 36.9 percent of newly employed teaching assistants enter those jobs with a degree – as late as 1999, only 5.6 percent of the occupation as a whole did so.
The CIPD is calling on the Government to:

- improve the quality of careers advice and guidance to young people while they are in school so they can make better informed choices about career options;
- ensure that apprenticeship policy moves away from trying to simply increase numbers towards improving the quality and progression routes of apprenticeships, in order to create a meaningful alternative route to university for young people and employers; and
- ensure the forthcoming industrial strategy has a clear focus on creating more high skilled jobs and progression routes at work.

Peter Cheese, CIPD Chief Executive, said: “This report shows clearly how the huge increase in the supply of graduates over the last 35 years has resulted in more and more occupations and professions being colonised by people with degrees, regardless of whether they actually need them to do the job. Governments of all colors have long had a ‘conveyor belt’ approach to university education, with a rhetoric that has encouraged more and more students to pursue graduate qualifications. However, with this research showing that for many graduates, the costs of university education outweights its personal economic benefits, we need a much stronger focus on creating more high-quality alternative pathways into the workplace, such as higher level apprenticeships, so we really do achieve parity of esteem between the two routes.”

He continued: “Graduates are increasingly finding themselves in roles which do not meet their career expectations, while they also find themselves saddled with high levels of debt. This ‘graduatization’ of the labor market also has negative consequences for non-graduates, who find themselves being overlooked for jobs just because they have not got a degree, even if a degree is not needed to do the job. Finally, this situation is also bad for employers and the economy as this type of qualification and skills mismatch is associated with lower levels of employee engagement and loyalty, and will undermine attempts to boost productivity.”