

# Notes and news

## Blended learning takes off at Malaysia Airlines

Malaysia Airlines and Peak Pacific have signed an agreement to design and develop blended learning for cabin familiarization and safety and emergency procedures (SEP) training for flight and cabin crew, with the introduction of Malaysia's latest A350 fleet of aircraft.

The training will be a combination of e-learning content and mobile apps. It marks a major shift in the airline's training direction.

The Malaysia Airlines Chief Executive, Izhom Ismail, commented: "Malaysia Airlines has been looking for a blended-learning solution as part of its new strategy for pilot and cabin-crew training. Peak Pacific has [...] experience in developing flight and cabin crew training, including SEP, having worked for almost 10 years with some of the world's leading airlines. The SEP solution for the A350 and A330 fleet will be a new training approach and sets the path for other fleets to follow."

The Peak Pacific Founder and Group Chief Executive, Kishor Mistry, said: "Having worked with Malaysia Airlines on other technology projects, we understand its goals, expectations and challenges. Hence the ability to work as partners in a more consultative and collaborative manner to deliver quality solutions and products is essential. We look forward to working with the airline and Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia to implement a world-class solution."

## Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) to get new campus

Plans have been unveiled for a new campus for XJTLU. The campus, to be constructed in the city of Taicang, will mirror aspects of XJTLU's existing provision, offering the opportunity to study both in China and in the UK. It is proposed that the campus will open in 2020 and it is anticipated to grow to a community of 6,000 students by 2025.

The Liverpool University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Janet Beer, said: "Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University has established itself as an outstanding example of Sino-British collaboration in higher education. I am delighted that we, together with XJTLU and Xi'an Jiaotong University, and in partnership with the Taicang city government, are building on this international success. The new campus will forge innovative, dynamic relationships between the university, local companies and society, providing international graduates and contributing to the knowledge economy."

The campus will enable new links to be formed between XJTLU, industry and the local community in Taicang, supporting sustainable development and providing opportunities for students to spend time working with and within the city's expanding industrial base. A key focus will be to develop graduates in science and technology with expertise in artificial intelligence and robotics who will go on to lead new industries.

Professor Youmin Xi, Executive President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, XJTLU, said: "The new Taicang campus meets our ambitious mission to develop the university of the future, establishing a new relationship between the university and companies, industries and the wider community."

Launched in 2006, XJTLU is a joint venture between the University of Liverpool and Xi'an Jiaotong University, which has grown to more than 12,000 students and 1,000 staff, who come from more than 50 countries. It is the largest of its kind in the country.

The partnership is based at the XJTLU campus in the city of Suzhou and its students gain both Chinese and UK degree accreditation. Many XJTLU students opt to finish their degree overseas, and there are currently around 3,000 studying at the University of Liverpool. A number of University of Liverpool students take the opportunity to spend a year of their studies in Suzhou.

The proposed campus in Taicang will include space dedicated to innovation and entrepreneurialism. It is expected to contribute to the overall growth of XJTLU to 24,000 students by 2028.

### **More graduate development at deVere**

One of the world's largest independent financial advice organizations is to expand its graduate program to help to secure new talent.

Nigel Green, Founder and Chief Executive of the deVere Group, has confirmed that at least 125 graduates will take part in the program this year, up from 94 in 2017.

"Due to the ongoing success of the deVere graduate program, which enables graduates to become qualified financial advisers often within two years, we will significantly expand it this year. We are committed to taking on at least 125 graduates in 2018," he commented.

"We now have advisers who started on the graduate program in every one of our major offices around the world. From Hong Kong to New York, Sydney to Dubai, Cape Town to Geneva, and beyond, they are there achieving their personal objectives while professionally helping our clients to fulfil their long-term financial goals."

He continued: "With demand for sound, independent financial advice growing around the world, the baby-boomer generation now in or heading into retirement, financial technology advances, and with many existing advisers leaving the industry because of the pressures of increasing regulation and/or retiring, there is a pressing need for the sector to step up and to train and recruit the next generation of wealth-management professionals to fill the impending adviser gap. At deVere we are committed to using our resources to doing just that, and in a bigger way than ever."

Nigel Green went on to say: "Like the industry itself, the deVere Group graduate program is known to be hard work and intense, but it is highly rewarding and it is producing some great success stories – and we want to build on that even further. The program begins with a foundation period at the firm's administrative hub in Malta and is followed by further training at one of the deVere academies, which can be found in locations including Dubai, Malaga, Sydney and New York. The locations are chosen for their diverse and vibrant social and cultural scenes, meaning graduates can get the most from their experience."

He added: "We are confident that we can attract the best graduates to become the new industry leaders. We provide invaluable hands-on experience with high-net-worth clients worldwide, one-to-one in-depth mentoring from already-established and successful financial consultants, training from leading institutions, opportunities to work all over the world, as well as formal industry qualifications."

Nigel Green concluded: "By expanding our graduate program, we are keeping pace with a growing sector and securing new talent to meet the evolving financial needs and wants of individuals."

### **Learning and communications strategies drive success at Carpetright**

Unification of learning and communications strategies is helping to drive success at UK high-street retailer Carpetright.

Lyn Warren, HR Director at the firm, commented: "Carpetright has taken transformational steps in ensuring that learning strategies are modernized for the workforce."

The firm is working with learning-solutions business Fuse Universal. Its Chief Executive, Steve Dineen, said: "When we began working with Carpetright 18 months ago it was evident that its success story would be driven by the unification of its learning and communications strategies. What we have seen as a result is quite remarkable both in terms of daily learning habits and employee engagement results. Carpetright is not your typical technology firm so to see the unprecedented levels of engagement and business performance is a statement to the industry that paves the way for other traditional retailers and organizations looking to move their business forward."

Lyn Warren added: “What we know from hard data is that the colleagues that connect the most with Fuse and really engage with the content perform much better than their peer group. They learn about the products we are selling, the services we offer and how best to serve our customers.”

### **Lack of training holds back UK business**

The average UK professional has gone two years without training and more than one in ten has had no training in more than four years. Almost two-thirds of UK employees say they would switch employers to secure more regular training opportunities.

Research by Avado, the digitally powered professional-learning provider, reveals this lack of training is holding back UK businesses. Two-fifths of professionals say they are less productive in their job without regular training and a quarter are worried they will be passed over for promotions.

When they do receive training, only half of workers say it allows them to keep pace with developments in their industry. When asked what is holding them back, staff say taking time out of the office is the most common reason that training is not more regular (37 percent) while the cost to their employer also plays an important part (29 percent). Nearly a quarter also highlighted that there was lack of suitable courses available to them.

To make training more useful and exciting, 43 percent of the UK employees would like the option to access courses online, and one in five would be keen to use virtual reality. In addition to this, 84 percent say they would like to take control of their own professional development by choosing the content that is most relevant for them and completing it when it suits them best – and would feel more loyal to an employer who allowed them to do so.

Mark O'Donoghue, Avado Chief Executive, commented: “One of the biggest challenges facing businesses today is digital disruption. As a result we are seeing organizations trying to transform rapidly, without implementing effective training to ensure their people have the necessary skills to adapt to new ways of working. The world of work is changing fast – employees now change jobs more frequently than ever and the rise of the gig economy means more staff are on short-term contracts or self-employed – yet the world of training has not kept pace. As a result, many workers are not getting the professional development they need to learn new skills in order to be productive and effective in their jobs.”

He continued: “Online learning is making it easier than ever for businesses to offer staff regular and relevant training that they can complete at a time and place that suits them, with innovations such as VR and AI set to revolutionize training even further. By embracing this new way of learning, businesses can make sure training is not only more collaborative, engaging and effective but has a real impact on individuals and the how the business operates.”

### **Important milestone for brewing trailblazer**

Brewhouse and Kitchen, along with 25 UK breweries, has developed the first advanced brewing qualification to exist in the UK.

The Brewing Apprenticeship Trailblazer has formalized the first stage of a shift in the pub sector and wider hospitality industry, with the submission of its standards and end-point assessment to the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Members of the 25-strong brewer partnership include Greene King, Five Points, Wimbledon, Fullers, Heineken and Marston's. It is chaired by Kris Gumbrell, Chief Executive of Brewhouse and Kitchen. Serving as the first formal accreditation of its kind for Britain's future brewers, the announcement is set to recalibrate a professional infrastructure that currently does not progress beyond level 2.

The Brewing Apprenticeship Trailblazer network has been meeting for more than a year to scope and finesse this level 4 brewing apprenticeship, ensuring it meets the needs of a growing industry.

The submission is a step toward creating better career pathways for people who have a passion for learning about brewing.

Kris Gumbrell commented: "This is an important milestone for the trailblazer group and we are very pleased to bring this much needed development in brewing education to the industry."

Brigid Simmonds, Chief Executive of the British Beer and Pub Association, commented:

The brewer apprenticeship has been developed by industry employers across all levels of production of beer. The apprenticeship will ensure the high standards of knowledge, skills and behaviors expected by industry employers are maintained. If approved, the apprenticeship will provide an exciting route to bring the next generation of brewers into the industry.

## **Immersive digital learning fuels success at npower**

When UK energy company npower moved its enterprise systems to SAP, a major challenge ensued: how to train 4,500 people on the new system quickly and efficiently, including customer-facing teams at the contact center.

Andy Hurren, Head of learning at npower, said: "At the time, we had no digital training capabilities and no functional learning-management system, which meant everyone had to be trained in classrooms, using a traditional training client."

This traditional approach meant high training costs for the SAP deployment and npower knew that future training projects could not be undertaken in the same way. It needed to find a more efficient way of delivering systems training while also delivering a better training experience for new members of staff.

The company opted for an immersive digital learning technology from Assima to revolutionize the training approach, save £3 million in training costs and deliver better training, faster and more efficiently. This was achieved by providing users with a highly interactive training environment, reducing reliance on classroom training and the associated high-cost system infrastructure. "Here was a system that would allow me to train new staff on SAP without the astronomical cost of building and maintaining a SAP training client," explained Andy Hurren.

As well as saving around £3 million, npower has reduced on-boarding times by 50 percent, reduced staffing for new programs by 80 percent, improved training standards and become the fifth most improved company in the UK for customer service.

## **Clarion calls on Ashridge**

Clarion Housing Group has partnered Ashridge Executive Education at Hult International Business School to provide senior leadership-development opportunities to 48 managers.

The initiative increases Clarion's focus on the growth and development of existing staff while also continuing to use professional development to attract good talent.

Historically offered at entry level within the business, the new approach includes the opportunity for employees to gain degree-level and master's qualifications delivered by Ashridge Executive Education.

Chris Simmons, regional head of operations at Clarion Housing Group, will take part in the leadership and management master's program. He said: "I applied because I saw it as a good way to be part of the evolution of Clarion. It is an exciting time to work here and everyone is working really hard to deliver on the business's ambitions. I want to make my contribution through being able to work at a strategic level and also by being an effective leader. In the housing sector, our external environment changes at a pace and we need to ensure that we adapt and continue to provide our customers with a good service. I am hoping that my master's qualification will equip me with tools to guide and support my team member to be the best they can be, too."

Jonathan Cawthra, Group Director of HR and corporate services at Clarion Housing Group, said: "One of our strategic objectives is being a great place to work. Part of achieving this means

developing our people and ensuring they have the right tools for the job. We are especially pleased to be working with Ashridge Executive Education to provide our staff with this significant professional-development opportunity. Ashridge Executive Education suits our staff's needs because it has demonstrated its ability to recognize and reflect our requirements, incorporating them into its world-class offer."

James Moncrieff, Professor of Practice at Ashridge Executive Education, commented: "We are delighted to work with Clarion to develop its managers through to degree and master's levels. These are challenging programs that will stretch the participants and enable them to fulfil more of their potential."

## Construction careers being viewed more positively

UK house-builder Redrow's second annual apprenticeship research report has discovered that the perception of construction as an apprenticeship pathway has improved, with a 14 percent increase (to 62 percent) in young people considering a job in the sector this year.

Redrow canvassed 2,000 parents and 15- to 21-year-olds and 167 of its own apprentices and benchmarked the findings against last year's responses. The results this year show 24 percent of young women considering a career in construction compared to 16 percent in 2017. This coincides with 19 percent fewer young people believing that the industry is dominated by men, with only 36 percent of young people saying this was true compared to 55 percent in 2017.

When it comes to apprenticeships, 63 percent of young people this year asserted that someone at school had outlined how apprenticeships work and their associated benefits. This is supported by a 10 percent increase in young people who said that they had received high-quality careers advice, information and guidance on a wide range of careers from their respective schools. Last year the figure stood at 17 percent.

Karen Jones, Group HR director, Redrow, said: "This year's results illustrate that apprenticeships and careers in construction are being viewed in a more positive light. Efforts by the all-party parliamentary group on apprentices and initiatives such as Go Construct from the Construction Industry Training Board can be credited with helping to make these encouraging strides. Apprenticeships are a way of future-proofing the UK workforce, particularly in sectors where there is a skill shortage such as construction, so it is pleasing to see that progress is being made."

This year's findings, however, also bring to light some fundamental barriers that remain in place for young people. Following discussions with construction and training industry experts as well as apprentices, it was revealed that the current tuition of mathematics and English skills as part of an apprenticeship program is an additional hurdle for young people to overcome.

Meanwhile, low wages were referenced as the biggest barrier to entry into an apprenticeship, with 42 percent of young people saying that an increase in first-year wages would incentivize them into the system. Further financial implications were expressed by parents, with 12 percent saying that the loss of family benefits when their child starts an apprenticeship, including cuts to child benefit and child tax credits, was a problem.

Karen Jones commented: "Theory-based classroom learning is not the right teaching method for every apprentice. With a third of people failing to complete their apprenticeships, it is more important than ever that we identify why this might be. Ensuring that mathematics and English are taught in a way that is as relevant to an apprentice's role as possible would be a good place to start. As well as this, money is a barrier for apprenticeship take-up. At Redrow, we pay a first-year starting wage of £4.75 per hour, 35 percent more than the standard rate and therefore recommend that first-year wages are raised closer to the national minimum wage. We also recommend that families keep access to benefits when their child starts the apprenticeship. If the government wants to increase apprenticeship uptake and wants to advance social mobility, reducing the financial burden for young people and families is vital."

## Uber selects EduMe

Uber has selected the EduMe micro-learning platform as its preferred training platform across 42 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

EduMe provides Uber with a scalable solution to support drivers using the mobility app. Bite-size, interactive sessions show driver-partners how to use the Uber app and provide tips on delivering good customer service. They can gain access to this information at their convenience from their smart-phones.

The EduMe training platform has been shown to significantly reduce the time to start driving with Uber while increasing drivers' productivity and the quality of their service.

Jacob Waern, EduMe Founder and Chief Executive, commented: "We have delivered real business impact by enabling Uber to scale faster and bring costs down, while maintaining quality. Uber is good example of the changing nature of the workforce – 50 percent of the global workforce will be mobile by 2020 and 50 percent will be made up of millennials. We use our smart-phones for all our needs and it is time to expect the same convenience from corporate training."

Taryn Morris, Uber's Regional Operations Lead, said: "We continuously look for new ways to enhance the driving experience and help drivers to make the most of their time on the road. The micro-learning platform provides an exciting opportunity to support hundreds of thousands of drivers across Europe, the Middle East and Asia in their daily interactions with riders and our technology."