

## Brownhills Motorhomes – training for the future

### Brownhills give staff the chance to gain NVQs

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With hundreds of staff spread over five branches and a history to the name which goes back 30 years, Brownhills has plenty of experience in looking after its employees. However, as Europe's biggest motorhome retailer and aftercare specialist, it decided to go further and put in place a formal training programme to help develop and encourage staff.

Brownhills strengthened its HR capability in early 2008 with the appointment of Carol Huggins as Group HR manager. Carol's brief is to deliver a broad scope of HR initiatives. Brownhills wanted to refocus its staff and help them grow as individuals, in their careers and, in turn, the business. Recognising their own limitations in such an ambitious programme, Brownhills chose Intec Business Colleges to provide the horsepower. Intec's national presence ensures that all the NVQ programmes across its sites are consistent. Intec also assisted Brownhills in tailoring the content and qualifications to suit the sector and the roles of staff within the business.

A range of staff across Brownhills sites are working towards NVQs in Customer Service, IT, Storage and Warehousing, Business and Administration and Management awarded by EDI, the UK's fastest growing awarding body. All the staff on the NVQ programmes, whether based in Swindon, Preston, Canterbury, Newcastle or Newark, have their own personalised schedules and timelines which allow for assessments which fit around individual commitments.

"The feedback that I have had from staff is that these qualifications are making them feel more valued. Many of them have already said they would be interested in doing the next qualification after they finish their current one," said Carol. "From my perspective, I am very happy with the progress of the programme and with the assessors' engagement and application."

Following the success of the training initiative, Carol is researching the feasibility of a start-up apprenticeship programme for the 2009 season, as well as introducing a graduate programme. The idea behind this is that through robust ascension planning, the company will identify and train people to develop and stay with Brownhills to become tomorrow's managers.

"Despite the fact that we are still halfway through the current batch of NVQs, I would say the qualifications are really helping to re-motivate our staff and make them feel more confident in their job roles, which is all the more positive in light of the current economic climate," said Carol. "Our people are more inspired, their attitudes are more positive and I think they feel that their employer really does care about them."



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