

BT and the Skills Agenda

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BT is regarded as an industry leader for its skills development activity, which is focussed on having a detailed understanding of future skills needs aligned to individual learning plans for every employee, to enable them to progress their career in ways that reflect both business and personal needs.

BT's role in the education engagement space is nationally and regionally recognised. As a result, senior representatives of the company have high profile roles with organisations that promote the value and benefit of employers engaging with the education and skills landscape.

- Sir Mike Rake (BT Chairman) is the government's champion for education and skills and regularly comments on the need for employers to develop not only their own workforce but also the workforce of the future through engagement with the education system. The organisations that he chairs – The UK Commission for Employment and Skills – reports to a number of Secretaries of State, including the Department for Work and Pensions which is a major customer of BT.
- Sally Davis (CEO BT Wholesale) is BT's representative on the Board of e-skills UK, the Sector Skills Council for IT and Telecoms. This body not only represents the views of employers to Government on matters of skills, but also takes proactive steps to address the short comings of the education sector in order to reduce the investment that employers will have to make in the future. The e-skills UK Board comprises CEOs of many of BT's competitors including IBM, Accenture and Logica, and the CIOs of some of the largest purchasers of IT service including British Airways, BBC, Network Rail, Sainsbury's, UBS and Unilever.

Some of the activities that BT runs to deliver against its skills agenda include:-

- **Apprenticeships:** The award winning BT Apprenticeship scheme is a significant recruitment channel for new talent joining the business. Apprentices are found in most lines of business. Most continue with further academic study following their Apprenticeship (university programmes, etc) and many quickly progress into management roles.
- **Accreditation of internal learning:** BT was one of the first companies to benefit from government policy changes that enable internal learning delivery to be externally accredited and beneficiaries to receive externally recognised qualifications. We are now delivering a programmes of accreditation across the BT Retail Contact Centres that will lead to more than 7000 BT employees gaining externally recognised qualifications before July 2010.
- **National Skills Academy:** BT is the lead employer in a sector wide consortium of employers developing plans to establish a National Skills Academy for the IT and Telecoms sector. This Academy, due to open during the Autumn of 2009, will revolutionise the quality of learning provision available for employers and will simplify the processes by which government funding for training is made available and accreditation of learning is delivered.

BT supports the external skills agenda through its knowledge and experience, as well as resource including volunteers' time. Schools and colleges have been helped in the development of the curriculum and content for the new Diploma in IT. Universities have been helped in the development of courses more aligned to our specific needs. We have supported all three sectors in delivering courses and the provision of work based projects and placements. We intend to ensure that the recruitment pool of the future has the skills we require and is attracted to working in the IT and Telecoms sector.

In the current economic climate, we must ensure we have greater intelligence of the skills requirements the company will need over the next five years. By doing this, we can ensure the investment we are making in developing the skills of our people is focussed on skills that will support us through the down turn, while ensuring we are prepared to respond to our customers' future requirements.