

Our people

They say you can tell a lot about a company by the people that it employs and BT people are the heart and soul of the BT proposition.

Every one of our people – including our field engineers, our call centre advisers, our operators, our network specialists, members of our professional support functions, our research scientists, our software engineers, our account managers – needs to be absolutely focused on our more than 21 million customers.

Their customers are the most important people in their working lives – more important even than the boss. Customers expect and deserve nothing less.

Because there is an absolute connection between valued employees and happy customers, recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining the right people is the key to improving the service we offer, and to developing the innovative products and services that improve customers' lives and businesses.

Successful organisations are learning organisations. Which is why we invest around £200 million a year in the training and development of our people, including technical and commercial training, modern apprenticeships, personal skills and management development. The BT Academy, for example, is a virtual corporate university, offering everything from short, "just-in-time" training to Masters degrees.

Given that we aim to deliver an excellent customer experience to all our customers, many of our training and development initiatives are designed to create a customer-focused service-excellence culture within BT.

And it works.

In the 2002 financial year, in the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and consumer markets, BT achieved better customer satisfaction scores than our competitors in nine of the 12 months. The percentage of consumers expressing satisfaction with our service provision was up 3.9% on the previous year; while the percentage of business customers expressing satisfaction rose by 2.2%. There was also a 10%



increase in the number of customers reporting that BT had answered their calls "promptly". And we are striving to improve this performance.

Our millions of customers are representative of the population as a whole – young and old, able-bodied and with disabilities, from a variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, of different sexual orientations, with and without responsibilities to care for others.

Connecting successfully with them means reflecting that diversity within our organisation. It's an ethical and business imperative that BT people should represent, understand and value different perspectives.

We are members of organisations such as Opportunity Now and Race for Opportunity, which seek to promote diversity and equality of opportunity in the workplace, and recently won the Parents at Work/DTI Employer of the Year Award, impressing judges with our approach to helping people achieve the right work/life balance.

We also encourage our people to help their local communities.

And if BT people are to go on meeting the needs of their customers, they're going to have to spend more of their time focused on the future, understanding the possibilities of our industry.

Our research and development laboratories have an enviable reputation for vision, inspirational thinking and delivering technological excellence. This is where we develop the communications services that will enhance our customers' lives one, five and ten years from now.

