



## meet Acorn's new recruit!



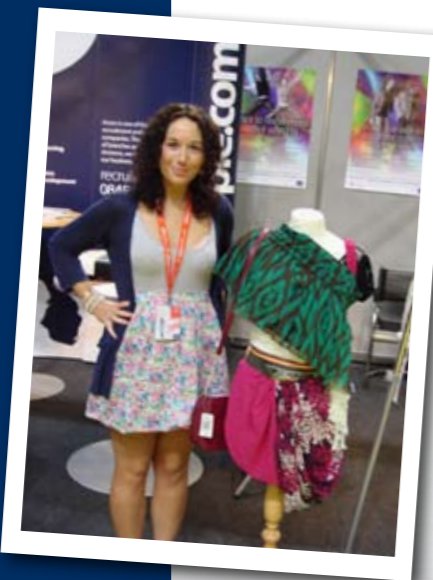
Emily Davey has been appointed as a Business Development Manager for Acorn's Training Division to focus on a recruitment solution for employers aimed at apprenticeship recruitment. Emily said: "Apprenticeships offer excellent opportunities, not just for employers but for people wanting to get thorough, professional training with a nationally-recognised qualification and transferable skills."

Emily's role involves working with employers to help them set up apprenticeships and also find appropriate candidates to fill them. If you have an apprenticeship opportunity within your company, or you are looking to become an apprentice, call Emily on 07867 530 923 to find out how she can help.

## Acorn at Skills Cymru

Acorn was amongst the 115 organisations who exhibited at the Skills Cymru event, held at the Millennium Stadium, in September 2010. The exhibition achieved 20,765 visitors and proved a great success raising skill levels throughout Wales to increase national competitiveness and success in business.

Acorn attended to raise awareness of the variety of apprenticeships we can offer with a particular focus on retail. We invited visitors to test their merchandising skills by dressing mannequins. The standard of the entries were very high but the overall winner (pictured right) was Sarah Murtadha.



## people matters

For Acorn, corporate responsibility is about the core values and principles that govern the way we operate as an organisation. It is about ensuring we sustain a safe working environment; have a positive impact on our people, the communities we work in and the wider environment; and build the trust and respect of our customers. As such we provide a wide range of information to both learners and employers aimed at sustaining and improving the environment within which we operate, minimising any negative impact.

### Education for Sustainability Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

Global warming, citizenship and sustainability are issues that affect us all, and it doesn't take a lot of effort to make a significant difference.

*Tip: Do you have an opportunity to car share?*

Car sharing and efficient motoring can help save money and cut your carbon footprint at the same time. If your company does not have a car share scheme, why not set one up?

### formal accredited ESDGC qualification

If you are interested in gaining a formal accredited ESDGC qualification, please email Ann McConnon at [ann.mccnonnon@acornpeople.com](mailto:ann.mccnonnon@acornpeople.com) or speak to your Training Advisor.

## wellbeing

Wellbeing in the workplace is a keen topic of conversation within the training industry. There are four common criteria's in which you as an employer need to consider to ensure the wellbeing of your learners and staff:

### attitudes to keeping healthy and safe

Ensure your learners feel safe, within and outside the job place, from any physical or verbal abuse / bullying. Try to also encourage a healthy eating and active lifestyle.

### participation and enjoyment in learning

Encourage learners to take an interest and pride in their work. In addition to looking at attitudes and behaviours, also consider the attendance record of your learner.

### community involvement and decision making

Do not make all the decisions for your learners, make sure they are part of the decision making process about their training. Think about the work carried out within the community - corporate social responsibility is a key subject matter.

### social and life skills

Consider how learners show respect, care and concern for others in the workplace. Do they participate fully throughout their training.



Helena Williams

## welcome

**If you are in training, employ trainees or involved in providing training, this brand new newsletter is for you ... so welcome to Learning Matters.**

Training is hugely important to us all but constantly changes, making it hard for everyone to keep up with developments. At Acorn, we recently carried out Employer surveys and found 100% of employers would welcome a regular newsletter to keep them informed of news and opportunities in this vital sector – so here it is.

We do want this newsletter to be of use to you so your feedback is important. Please let me know what you think of the information we've provided and tell me which aspects of training you'd like more information on; just email [learningmatters@acornpeople.com](mailto:learningmatters@acornpeople.com) to let us know.

Helena Williams  
Corporate Development Director



## Acorn's new website improves access to training solutions

**Acorn has used software specially developed with our technology partners, to create a website that makes it easier to search for a suitable training programme than ever before.**

The website has been developed to meet the needs of both employers and learners alike. The site boasts improved search facilities together, with a new electronic course calendar giving up-to-date information on the training courses available, and is fully interactive with major social media platforms ensuring relevant information is quickly and easily accessible to all.

Take a look on [www.acornpeople.com/training](http://www.acornpeople.com/training) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

## course in focus

### developing the skills of your Team Leaders...

Managing a team of employees and guiding them to achieve or improve their performance can be challenging. A successful Team Leader requires a range of skills in order to meet the day-to-day demands of a busy workforce and a solid grounding in the fundamental basics of team management is essential. This is where Acorn can help!

### the ILM Level 2 Award in Team Leading programme dates:

workshop 1 – developing yourself as a Team Leader	<b>12th January 2011</b>
workshop 2 – motivating the work team to perform	<b>9th February 2011</b>
workshop 3 – developing the work team	<b>9th March 2011</b>

Delegates can enjoy a discount of **up to 70% off** the programme costs subject to eligibility and availability of funding support, the funding will be received from the Convergence ESF Programme 2007-2013 provided through the Welsh Assembly Government.

To take advantage of this excellent opportunity or to obtain further information please contact us:

**t: 01633 674 555**  
**e: [training@acornpeople.com](mailto:training@acornpeople.com)**

**STOP PRESS!**  
young recruits programme update

Due to the success of the **weekly wage subsidised programme** the Welsh Assembly is pleased to announce that the deadline for applications is extended until **Thursday 31st March 2011**. All applications must be returned by the 31st March 2011, and individuals must commence learning by the 8th April 2011.

To find out more and to view the full eligibility criteria for this programme please visit [www.acornpeople.com/young-recruits](http://www.acornpeople.com/young-recruits) or contact Emily Davey via [training@acornpeople.com](mailto:training@acornpeople.com) alternatively call us on 01633 647 555.





# vocational training - a change for the better

A new National Minimum Wage for apprentices was introduced on the 1st October 2010. The wage will apply to all apprentices aged under 19; and apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their Apprenticeship.

The Apprentice minimum wage will be £2.50 per hour and applies to time working, plus time spent training that is part of the formal Apprenticeship.

Employers will be free to pay above the new wage. Many already do so and this change will not affect that, but employers must ensure that they are paying their apprentices at least the minimum wage.

## your survey said...

As part of Acorn's Employer Engagement Strategy we are committed to ensuring that all employers are involved and informed at every stage of the Learning Journey.

In line with this commitment and to ensure that we communicate in an effective and timely manner we asked for feedback from employers as to how they would prefer to receive information from us and what topics they would find useful. Over 700 questionnaires were sent out and we had a fantastic response rate of 96%.

The results of the survey were very positive and indicated 100% of Employers would welcome a newsletter from Acorn. The most popular topics suggested for the newsletter were; new courses, funding availability, relevant events and information on legislative changes. We will endeavour to cover these topics in this and coming issues but if you have any specific questions or burning issues please do not hesitate to contact us on 01633 674 555.

Over the next few months there will be significant changes to vocational qualifications across the UK. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (known as CQFW in Wales) is the new Government blueprint, which sets out how all regulated vocational qualifications should be structured, titled and quality assured. It is replacing the existing National Vocational Qualification Framework across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**What are the changes being introduced?**  
Employers and employees in Wales have enjoyed the opportunity to develop their skills and expertise through vocational training, and many learners have achieved qualifications, which have helped them to progress with their careers or recognise their competence. The National Vocational Qualification framework has worked well in the past but it is now recognised that learning is a lifelong commitment and requires a framework that embraces learning from early schooling onwards.

To support this need to recognise lifelong learning, a new framework called **Credit and Qualifications Framework (or CQFW in Wales)** will be introduced into all working sectors, schools and colleges over the next two years.



If you have any questions on the introduction of the CQFW at this early stage of the process then please contact our Customer Service Department on 01633 674 555.

For vocational training, this means that the NVQ framework will be replaced by the new CQFW, which will give learners the opportunity to build up their credits into qualifications at different levels. It also enables employers to have their own training programmes accredited and nationally recognised.

If a learner is presently undertaking NVQs or has done so in the past, these will still be recognised but new entrants will now start using the new framework.

**How do the QCF and NQF qualifications differ?**  
The new qualifications are very flexible and can be tailored to suit your company's needs. They also enable companies to get their in-house training recognised as a qualification.

The new framework allows learners to work towards qualifications by undertaking smaller units of learning, enabling them to shape their learning around their work and home life.

**What are the benefits to employers?**

- the new framework will allow employers to have a say in deciding what training is needed for their industry's future
- employee satisfaction, motivation and retention can be improved and lead to better trained staff
- the quality of training and assessment is improved
- the framework assists employers to rapidly assess the level and size of prospective employees' achievements

**Funding**  
Acorn has been successful in accessing support funding for work related training and development activities for learners and businesses across Wales.

Acorn will support you in the application of funding to ensure that you receive the maximum support available.

**The future**  
Acorn, in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government and the National Training Federation of Wales, is committed to ensuring that employers and employees are briefed on the changes that affect them at every stage and will contact you as more information becomes available.

# evaluating training success

## How do you evaluate the success of your company's training?

At Acorn, we understand that training is essential if companies are to survive and thrive in the present economic climate. We also believe organisations should show they are serious about learning and development.

Gone are the days when business cases for training budgets were based on simple feedback such as questionnaires given out on the day. Today's companies need to show how the return on their investment (ROI) in training leads to success over time rather than on the day the training was concluded.

When considering the benefits and to calculate the ROI, we use the following as a guide;

<b>set pre-course objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify courses that are relevant to business needs</li> <li>• outline the required and expected benefits and outcomes</li> <li>• brief delegates prior to attendance on post course expectations</li> </ul>
<b>encourage Line Manager involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief managers on expected outcomes</li> <li>• encourage post-course feedback from delegates to Line Manager</li> <li>• review impact of delegate performance</li> </ul>
<b>decide which benefits to measure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labour savings</li> <li>• productivity increases</li> <li>• increased staff retention</li> <li>• increased input from staff</li> <li>• new processes / ideas / innovations</li> </ul>
<b>feedback results management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course / post course evaluation</li> <li>• delegate learning logs</li> <li>• on-going evaluation in the workplace</li> </ul>

## choosing a training partner who understands your business

An effective training partner should support your Training and HR functions. They should be able to;

- provide you with an initial assessment of the job competencies of your workforce
- produce a detailed training plan and budget
- establish effective support for all training services
- recommend tailored learning to enhance a company's competitive edge addressing their on-going business and performance expectations therefore helping you monitor your ROI
- advise of any Government funding / subsidies available at local or national levels (this can result in staff development programmes delivered at a greatly reduced cost or even fully-subsidised)
- agree a monitoring process for measuring ROI as well as soft skills evaluation

To find out how Acorn can assist you please contact us:

**t: 01633 674 555**  
**e: [training@acornpeople.com](mailto:training@acornpeople.com)**

### Suggested topics for Learning Matters

