

Business & Administration group gets behind Apprenticeship Week 2009

Message for today's apprentice: "You're Hired!"

The CfA (Council for Administration) is putting its weight behind Apprenticeship Week by engaging in a series of communications activities to promote the importance and value of careers in Business & Administration.

Set up only last year by the Learning & Skills Council, this year's Apprenticeship Week (Feb 23-29) comes at a critical time for the UK economy. With unemployment at the two million mark and rising, there is a real need for British businesses to consider alternative employment schemes that offer real benefits to both the employer and employee. Such benefits include lower employment costs and greater employee productivity for the employer and the opportunity to receive comprehensive and career enhancing skills training for the employee.

One of the skills and training gaps recognised by both government and industry is for employees working in Business & Administration. There are currently five million people employed in Business & Administration, representing 20% of all employees in the UK and research has shown that by 2012 there will be a shortfall of over four million administrators unless drastic action is taken: "As the standards setting body for Business & Administration qualifications, it is part of our role to improve the awareness of Business & Administration across the UK and to remind people of the opportunities that it offers. Apprenticeship Week provides the CfA with a much-needed platform to deliver these messages," said CfA CEO Jenny Hewell.

As part of their commitment to this event, representatives from the CfA will be embarking on a series of activities during the week - these include face-to-face meetings with employers and direct mail campaigns that highlight the value of embracing apprenticeship schemes for employees in Business and Administration.

"Part of what we will be doing is educating the market. We need to educate people about the value of apprenticeships and we also need to educate employers about the specific value of providing training for employees involved in Business & Administration. Proper training can be the difference between success and failure, something that is particularly critical in today's economy," said Hewell.

The Apprenticeship Week is part of the Government's drive to increase the number of apprenticeships in England to 400,000 by 2012 and follows directly on from a recent advertising campaign featuring Sir Alan Sugar, successful businessman and star of the TV series *The Apprentice*.

To achieve this target, it is imperative that apprenticeships are seen as the way forward by all types of organisations, both large and small.

Critically, therefore, the CfA is targeting SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises) as well as large corporates: "Most large companies are already fully aware of the benefits of apprenticeships," added Hewell. "We believe that there is a massively

untapped market amongst the UK SME community. When you consider that they represent 99.9% of companies registered then this clearly needs to be addressed. So we are communicating with small businesses, particularly those with training managers, talking to them about the benefits of Business & Administration apprenticeships. There are huge benefits for them, not least in reduced training costs but also in better motivated staff and the resulting increase in productivity."

About the CfA:

As the national standard setting body for Vocational Education in Business, Administration and Governance, the CfA (Council for Administration) leads the UK's drive for world class skills. Our vision is to develop qualifications and training courses that ensure employers train their employees to the highest level and empower learners to make a difference in their workplace. We design standards and apprenticeship frameworks, endorse qualifications, develop skills and conduct research and consultancy to achieve this vision.

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