

Property Consortium UK

Taunton

Carly Aitken is so enthusiastic about the training provided by Richard Huish College that you could be forgiven for wondering if she works there.

But no. Carly is actually the Training and Development Co-ordinator for Property Consortium UK, a national building repair network for insurance companies that just happens to be using the college to train its call centre staff.

And the fact that Carly has no connection with the college other than that makes her praise for its flexibility and attitude to employers all the more remarkable.

“We have 17 of our people signed up on the Customer Service Level 3 NVQ,” she says. “It’s been really, really popular and they are all really happy with the way it’s been rolled out. I’ve developed a very good rapport with Carys Evans, the college’s Employer Responsiveness Manager, in a very short period of time. It’s made the whole situation so much easier for us.

“Her enthusiasm is infectious, and within minutes of her coming here I had people saying they wanted to do this or do that. And people who weren’t interested in the beginning have seen the other people getting involved and what they’re doing and are now asking if they can sign up in a couple of months’ time!”

Carly, who is responsible for the training needs of about 70 staff, says the college’s willingness to deliver the training when and where the company needs it makes a significant difference to an operation whose staff need to work shifts and at weekends.

“The college are happy to fit in with our shifts,” she says. “They’ve even offered to come in here on Saturdays and early evenings if we need it. And they’ve offered to create two specific half-day courses for us that they’re providing free of charge.

“We were very keen for the training not to have a negative impact on the business by getting in the way of people’s work – but as they do everything in-house, that keeps any disruption to a minimum. Our CEO is over the moon and I’ve had good feedback from the managers, too.

“The main benefit we have seen so far is the increased confidence of all of the people involved. Most of them are young and it’s their first job since college or at least their first office job.

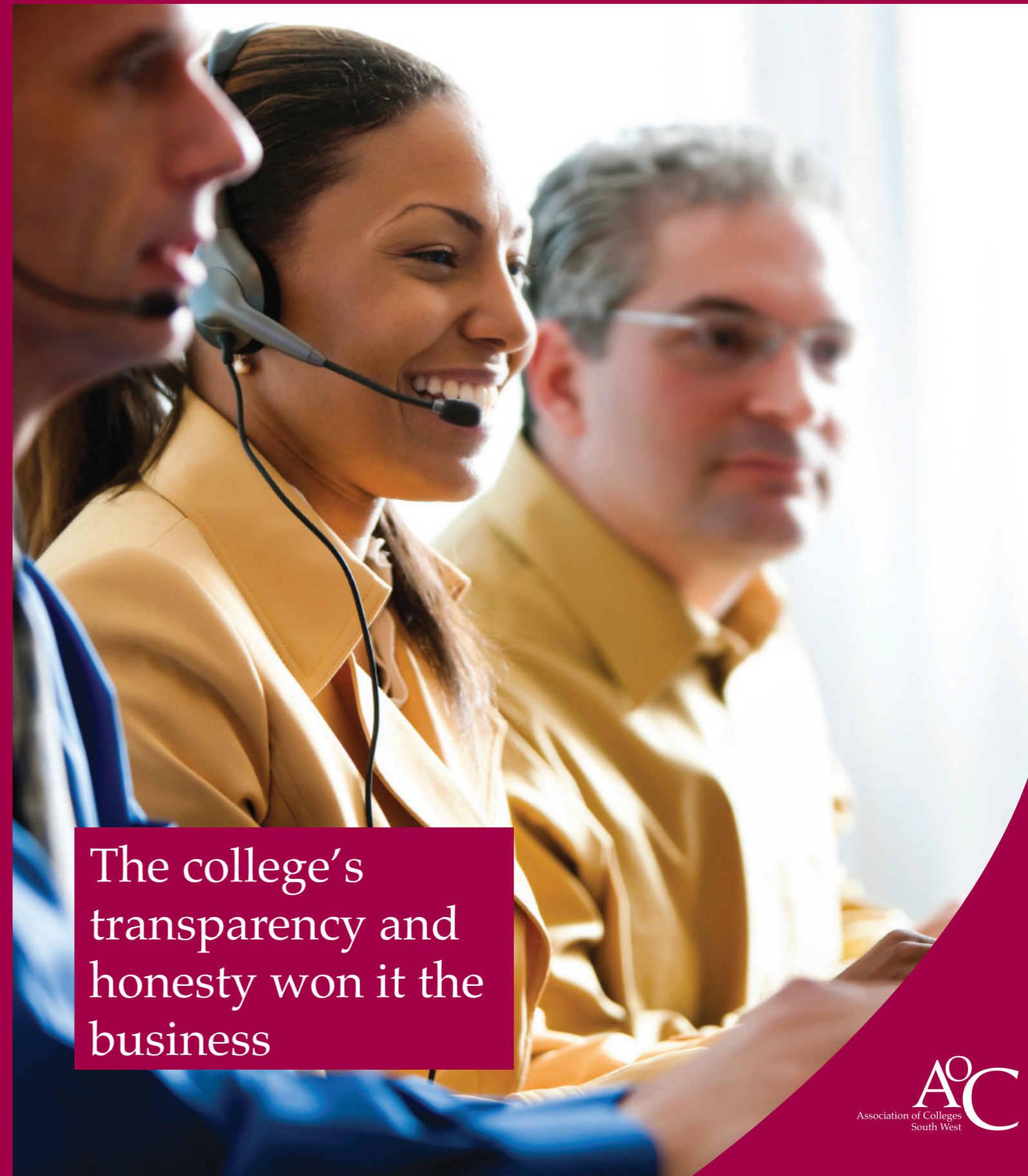
“Property Consortium is a rapidly expanding company, so any training we can do internally or externally is of massive importance to us,” she says. “I’ve been here two and a half years and the company has greatly increased in size in that time. We’re working towards Investor in People status and this is playing a major part in it.”

Carly, who is going to do an A1 assessor’s award herself – also free of charge – says the college’s transparency and honesty won it the business.

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“What we found so good about them in comparison with other training providers we’ve used is that they’ve been quick to advise us on which options fit our needs the best – and if it’s one they don’t offer, they’ll still suggest it and pass on the business to an organisation that does offer it. It’s made a massive difference to us, because while some training providers only want to push what they want to offer, Richard Huish College are looking a lot more at our needs rather than what might be the most convenient for them to offer.

“They’ve been putting our needs before their own, which is what we want from a training provider.”



The college’s transparency and honesty won it the business