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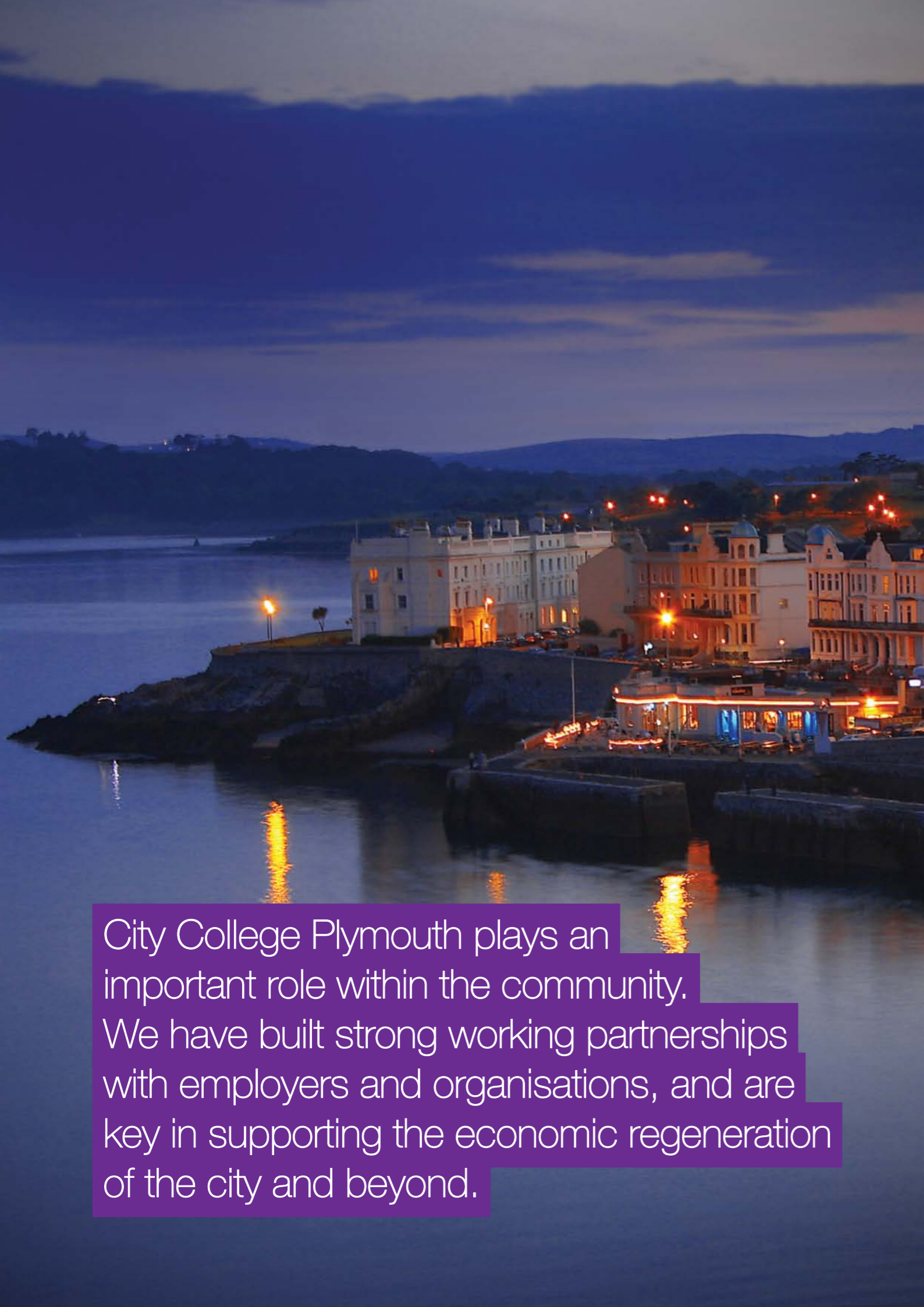
Employer Case Studies

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City College Plymouth plays an important role within the community. We have built strong working partnerships with employers and organisations, and are key in supporting the economic regeneration of the city and beyond.

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Pipex Ltd - Apprenticeships

City College Plymouth is saving a specialist manufacturer time and money by assisting in the selection process for Apprenticeships. Bill Murphy, the director responsible for training at Belliver-based Pipex, says jointly interviewing potential apprentices with the College reduces expense and improves the chances of finding people with the right aptitude. One of the key advantages about using the College for our Apprenticeships is not having to go through the timely and costly normal process of recruitment. We're hoping this process will provide a regular, highly motivated, good quality source of operatives to work in the business."

Bill is full of praise for the College's approach to the construction and engineering Apprenticeships that equip employees to work on the company's projects worldwide and in the domestic market.

"We're hoping we will be able to develop our relationship with the College to allow us to have an input into the courses so the apprentices can be even better prepared and useful to the business.

"Because of the bespoke nature of the training we do, we've found it difficult to recruit people with relevant experience or qualifications, but hopefully the apprentices will become very useful to the business, very quickly.

"We couldn't do this without the co-operation of City College Plymouth."

"The first apprentices will join us in the summer after spending a year at the College. They come to us with a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and an ECITB safety passport to allow them access to site work and will continue to be assessed here while they carry on training in the workplace. The Apprenticeships will last for another two years with weekly day-release to the College until they have attained an NVQ Level 3 in Pipefitting.

"We're hoping this scheme will provide mutual benefits to the business and the apprentices, offering them the opportunity to join a dynamic young company, become part of the team with good long-term prospects, and the opportunity to develop individually."

Pipex has always invested in people by employing and training them, and gradually promoting and developing them. Bill is hoping the partnership with the College will help Pipex achieve a workforce which is well trained and certificated in pipefitting, and who have a basic understanding of the job requirements before undergoing the firm's own specific training. He says the company's growth over the past five to ten years means it needs a large pool of people from which to select its workforce - something the Apprenticeship scheme can deliver.

"The signs are very encouraging," he says, "we have a very stable local workforce and we're on target and budget for all current projections across the Pipex group of companies."

Pipex, which specialises in the design, manufacture and installation of corrosion-resistant thermoplastic and composite products, hopes to expand the Apprenticeship scheme in future years and is demonstrating its commitment to its workforce by applying for the Investors in People accreditation. "We couldn't do this without the co-operation of City College Plymouth," adds Bill. "They have always responded positively to our business needs - listening closely in order to really provide practical and effective training solutions, which maximise our training budget."

The Duke of Cornwall Hotel

City College Plymouth has helped staff at the Duke of Cornwall hotel to become more motivated, more efficient, and more satisfied with their roles - a feat achieved by offering training in the workplace, or at the College, to suit the needs of its workers.

The Duke of Cornwall, Plymouth's first luxury hotel, is happy for their guests to come and go, but they like their staff to stay. That's why Jon Morcom, Operations Director at the hotel is a firm believer in training.

"Our ethos is very much on training and we always look to the College to provide that training," says Jon. "We see City College Plymouth as a centre of excellence, providing the same quality and standards that we expect at the Duke of Cornwall."

Teresa Gardner, Head of Academy of Hospitality and Service Industry Skills at the College, says that the hotel has really embraced the opportunities offered by training.

"This is an excellent example of a hotel's commitment to the lifelong learning of its staff. The relationship with the Duke of Cornwall has been built over many years through our support of specialist training for the hospitality industry.

"The training and assessment we have provided has given the Hotel the perfect opportunity to confirm their employees' competence in the workplace, gain nationally-recognised certification for their skills and, importantly, raise employee confidence and motivation."

In an industry which traditionally experiences high staff turnover, Jon has noticed a dramatic difference in the number of employees who have remained with the Hotel since it developed a training programme.

"Since we started to use City College Plymouth for our training, staff turnover has reduced dramatically. Members of staff feel that they are valued and that they have something to aim for in terms of progression - they see employment with the Duke of Cornwall as a career rather than just a job.

"We see City College Plymouth as a centre of excellence, providing the same quality and standards that we expect at the Duke of Cornwall."

"We have all seen the benefits of undertaking training. It has improved the quality of service we deliver, which is essential in this industry, and has raised standards within our organisation."



The Harbour Centre

The Harbour Centre, based in Plymouth, is dedicated to providing support and advice to those directly and indirectly affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

It offers confidential information, advice and treatment to young people and adults. The Centre is commissioned to deliver specialist treatment interventions in line with the National Treatment Agency Standards, and works in partnership with the Plymouth NHS and other statutory agencies.

The aim of the Centre is to increase the capacity across the City to support all those affected by drugs and alcohol.

In order to meet their aims, The Harbour Centre recognised the importance of equipping its specialist staff with the necessary skills to develop and deliver training to other professionals. As a result, they approached City College Plymouth to develop bespoke training based on national standards for the lifelong learning sector.

“The College and its staff were very professional, supportive and adaptable to our organisation’s needs and values, which is very important to an organisation of our type.”

In partnership with The Harbour Centre, the College developed an intensive training course based around an introductory day, an intensive training week and a final consolidation day, within a two week timescale.

The course was very well received, as one of the attending Substance Misuse Advisors, Kate, comments: “I thoroughly enjoyed the course and now feel more confident in designing and delivering training.”

Julie-Anne Sunderland, HR and Development Manager at The Harbour Centre emphasises: “The bespoke format developed for us by City College Plymouth was highly successful as it allowed the participants to disengage from their day-to-day job for a specific period. It enabled staff to purely focus on the training outcomes and to meet and spend time with other staff with whom they will be designing and delivering training.

“The College and its staff were very professional, supportive and adaptable to our organisation’s needs and values, which is very important to an organisation of our type.”

Chief Executive of The Harbour Centre, Jeremy Pritchard, adds: “The group had a wide range of experience and understanding - the delivery responded well to the group’s abilities and it made the course enjoyable.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed the course and now feel more confident in designing and delivering training.”



Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Over the past 12 months City College Plymouth has been helping administrative staff at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust take part in a pilot training scheme in order for staff to gain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in Business and Administration at levels 2 and 3.

The College worked closely with the training department at the NHS Trust in order to develop and fully embed the NVQ training programme throughout the administration sector of the organisation.

This close working relationship resulted in the College being able to bespoke the NVQ training to meet the specific business needs of the organisation. Sharon Hopkins, Training Officer for City College Plymouth says: "The NHS played an essential role in the delivery of the core knowledge and understanding requirements of the administrative role through training workshops."

“ I found the whole experience very enlightening and have found that it has enabled me to carry out my work within appointments to the very best of my ability. ”

Sharon continues: "The close links we have maintained through the partnership has enabled us to monitor and evaluate the provision and find solutions to meet the individual needs of the business."

The new training has benefited the whole organisation and its services. NHS Trust staff have a better understanding of their organisation, its direction and its values, and the training has made the workforce aware of their personal skills and abilities and the value of these to the Trust.

One of the outcomes from the training is that 80% of the training group have used their newly acquired skills to move into new roles within the Trust. This highlights the positive impact the training has given, by offering progression routes and job enrichment to staff whilst enabling the organisation to recruit staff with the necessary skills and training from within.

The positive impact on staff morale is endorsed by Stephanie Rowe, Complaints Support Officer with the Trust: "Undertaking the NVQ was a fantastic experience. I've been in the health service for 20 years and felt that I had hidden talents that weren't recognised. I've gone on to secure a position that I've been waiting for my entire career and I don't think I could have done it without the NVQ support from my training co-ordinator."

Shelagh Mullarkey, Clerical Officer adds: "I found the whole experience very enlightening and have found that it has enabled me to carry out my work within appointments to the very best of my ability."

"I found the support I received exceptional and support was always available by phone or by e-mail. I would recommend anyone within an administrative role to do an NVQ in Business and Administration."

Of course, the ultimate benefit is to the patient who is the focus of their service.

Otter Nurseries Plymouth

Otter Nurseries' passion for growing quality plants is at the root of their success, a success that can only stem from a happy and well trained workforce, which is why they sought training advice from City College Plymouth.

The College's successful relationship with Otter Nurseries has blossomed over the last four years, since it was invited to discuss the training options available to the company's new management team. "When I joined the company four years ago, training wasn't made available to the staff and it was obvious that the staff would benefit immensely from some sort of training programme," says Shaun Duff, General Manager of Otter Nurseries in Plymouth.

"City College Plymouth was the obvious choice when we were looking for a training provider. As an ex-student of the College I was aware of the quality of training it provides and I knew that the College would be able to deliver exactly the right training for our workforce.

"The College made the whole process so easy - a Business Skills Advisor visited our premises and spent the day talking to staff in order to gain an insight into the training needs required. These informal interviews were carried out in our staff canteen - this relaxed approach really helped to put staff at ease, especially those who were worried about undertaking training.

"The great thing about working with the College was the fact that we were assigned a single point of contact who was able to understand our business and who quickly identified our specific training needs. From warehouse distribution to business administration, we now have over 20 employees who have completed National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) through the College."

This successful working relationship has resulted in the College working with other branches of the Otter Nurseries group. The company now offers its workforce the opportunity to discuss their training needs with the College twice a year.

Sean says: "The feedback from staff has been fantastic - it's amazing to see the increased self-esteem, knowledge and ability that the training has created. One of the other benefits has been the reduction in staff turnover - since we began the training programme with the College we have had only one member of staff leave us, which is an incredible reduction over the period. Absence is low, morale is high - it really is a win, win situation for us!

"The staff at Otter Nurseries look after our plants and the College is looking after our staff - both have all of their needs met, in order for them to grow and flourish."

“The staff at Otter Nurseries look after our plants and the College is looking after our staff - both have all of their needs met, in order for them to grow and flourish.”





Pipex Ltd

City College Plymouth is helping staff at the corrosion resistant thermoplastic and composite products company, Pipex, develop their IT skills without them even setting foot inside the College! Staff have been able to study at a time and in a place that suits them.

The College is being praised for its flexible attitude to training by Pipex - a company established in 1975, which offers unprecedented expertise and experience in the design, manufacture and installation of corrosion resistant thermoplastic and composite products.

Dave Wren, Project Manager at Pipex, says the College's willingness to train staff in the workplace instead of in a classroom has saved the company money as well as time, inconvenience and unnecessary travelling.

"We needed a training package that would develop specific IT skills for 20 of our staff, but which would allow them to carry on doing their jobs without them having to spend a lot of time travelling to and from the College for training sessions. The College went to a lot of trouble and spent a lot of time with us to make sure they got it right."

The solution was a bespoke training programme that determined and delivered the specific training needs required by Pipex. "Distant and bespoke training works very well for us," says Dave. "Our staff have really benefited from receiving a bespoke training programme delivered onsite to meet their specific training needs - staff were much more relaxed learning in a familiar environment.

"To date we have put 20 members of staff through bespoke Excel and Project IT training programmes, with staff gaining recognised industry qualifications at the end of the training.

"The College went to a lot of trouble and spent a lot of time with us to make sure they got it right."

"The onsite training delivers on cost and supports us in managing our resources effectively - this makes sound business sense and ensures we maximise our training budget."

Dave continues: "When you're constantly developing your business, as Pipex is, a flexible approach to training really works - and it's made a significant difference to our performance and financial goals. We're extremely pleased to be working with the College and appreciate the help they've given our staff."

"The onsite training delivers on cost and supports us in managing our resources effectively."

Rittal-CSM Ltd

Rittal-CSM is a Plymouth-based engineering and manufacturing company, which designs and manufactures enclosures for the electronics and IT industries. Many of its 500 employees have gained qualifications with City College Plymouth. Currently, 38 employees are enrolled on courses as diverse as the Foundation Degree in Mechanical Engineering, CMI Management training and a wide range of NVQs.

The company is currently working with the College in order to train its employees in Business Improvement Techniques (BIT), which also reinforces the company's culture of continuous improvement.

The innovative cross-functional team approach to the training is also improving communication throughout the organisation. The first 23 Rittal employees have started their BIT NVQs and this will be rolled out throughout the remainder of 2009, with each month seeing a new group of eight taking the course. Members from every department in the company and from every level, including the senior management team, will take part.

Malcolm Bond, Training Manager at Rittal-CSM comments: "Over the years we have worked closely with the College to find solutions for difficult training requirements. A good example of this is when we needed to train 60 employees on our new appraisal process. Our previous system had been difficult to use and was ineffective, causing our managers to question the validity of conducting appraisals at all.

"What we needed was a training solution that would not only introduce the new process but also re-establish appraisals as an effective communication and development tool in the minds of the management team.

"Our training requirements were analysed by the College along with our appraisal process. This enabled the development of a bespoke half-day training event that combined appraisal theory with practical application of our own process. Jointly delivered by the College and myself, the training was delivered six times over a period of three weeks at various times of day.

"This innovative approach meant that everyone was able to attend without disrupting their work schedules, the degree of satisfaction expressed by the attendees was very high and the results have been excellent.

"Over the years we have worked closely with the College to find solutions for difficult training requirements."

"We have been very satisfied with the pro-active approach demonstrated by the College in supporting our staff development needs and would have no reservations in recommending their services to other companies."





Spinnaker

City College Plymouth is helping Spinnaker Ltd ensure it continues to lead the market in the development and supply of cash protection systems, through the continued training of its loyal workforce.

Established in 1985, the company's leading market position is maintained through a dedicated team whose continual generation of innovative ideas are converted into practical and user-friendly solutions - which is why Spinnaker demands the best training it can obtain for its staff.

Spinnaker is keenly aware of the importance of investing in its staff to ensure they have the right operational skills, high levels of competency and confidence in their own abilities. It is confident that the College understands these needs and is responsive to its requests.

“ People have gained confidence in their abilities and that in turn has led us to benefit as a company. ”

As a result, the relationship between Spinnaker and the College has been so successful that it has spanned over many years. Anne Temple, Spinnaker's Personnel Manager says: "We have used City College Plymouth over several years in various ways as they have always been able to provide the right training at the right time to suit our needs.

"Our staff have always had nothing but praise for the training they receive through the College, in fact one member of staff recently commented that his ambition had been awoken through the training he has undertaken at the College - high praise indeed! This enthusiasm for training has helped raise standards within the company and has been particularly useful for those who have been promoted internally."

Anne continues: "One of the biggest gains has been realised by those people who have worked for Spinnaker for a long time and have been satisfied with being in a non-managerial position - only to commence training and realise they have a natural flare as a team leader.

"People have gained confidence in their abilities and that in turn has led us to benefit as a company. We are retaining staff who are well trained and motivated, which in turn supports us in maintaining our position as the market leader in producing cash protection systems. Without investing wisely in our valued workforce Spinnaker would not be able to compete so effectively within its market."

“ Our staff have always had nothing but praise for the training they receive through the College. ”