

## TRAINING FOCUS PAYS OFF AT RAVENSDOWN

Processing over 200,000 calls every year, the Ravensdown contact centres in Christchurch and Napier are very much the hub of this fast-paced agricultural company – but the focus isn't just on selling fertiliser. With queries ranging from shareholding interests to accounts and animal health, Ravensdown contact centre professionals must be highly trained – and that's where national qualifications training comes in.

“Training to the national standard really works for us because it recognises the existing expertise of our contact centre professionals, whilst encouraging them to learn new skills,” says Ravensdown Customer Centre Manager, Clair Baker. “It's easy to get stuck in your comfort zone working in a contact centre, so it's been great to see our staff take a key role in leading national qualifications training.”



According to Ross Kennedy, ETITO Regional Manager Southern, for national qualifications training to be truly successful, it's critical to have a manager and key people who are training-focussed. Two such people at Ravensdown, are workplace assessors Suzanne Light and Jacqueline Romeyn, whose passion and dedication to training is driven by a genuine desire to see their trainees grow and achieve. It's an investment in professional development which has contributed markedly to increased job satisfaction within the company.

Indeed, Ravensdown's commitment to national qualifications training has helped increase motivation and morale amongst staff and has really influenced the quality of throughput. With the opportunity to reflect on what they do every day through training, employees have embraced the chance to independently evaluate their own performance and take steps to fill skill set gaps. Clair adds, “A fantastic and unexpected off-shoot of this has been the identification of potential leaders within our contact centre, proving national qualifications training can be an excellent retention tool because it creates a solid career pathway.”

Despite training only small groups at a time – in order to cope with a busy seasonal workload – Ravensdown's foray into national qualifications training has created quite a buzz, with posters and emails generating excitement across the organisation [not just in the contact centres]. On top of this, the company really made an effort to acknowledge the first group of eight staff members to complete a national qualification. Of the eight trainees, six gained the National Certificate in Contact Centre Operations [Level 3], as well as Suzanne and Jacqueline achieving the new National Certificate in Contact Centres – Senior CSR [Level 3]. To celebrate, graduates were taken out to lunch with their assessors and team leaders and consequently other employees are now champing at the bit to get involved.

Clair couldn't be more pleased. “From the outset we've said that national qualifications training is a privilege, and that there wouldn't be any hand-holding. But I've just been blown away with the commitment and enthusiasm displayed by our trainees, who've completed on target within a year of beginning the qualification. It's been a hugely inspiring process, and rewarding for all involved.”

If you'd like to find out more about how you can ramp up national qualifications training in your contact centre in 2010, contact your [ETITO learning and assessment consultant](#) or visit [www.etito.co.nz](http://www.etito.co.nz).