

CIPD Annual Conference, Manchester 2009.

We invited CIPD students studying at the local Centres to enter a prize draw for a free ticket to attend the CIPD Annual Conference at Manchester in November 2009. The lucky winner was student Alison Dorras, University of Glamorgan.

Our many thanks to Alison for kindly providing a report on her visit.

Elaine Lawson
Education and Development Co-ordinator.

Appreciation of a free student ticket!

I was lucky enough to win a free student ticket to the 2009 CIPD Annual Conference in Manchester. I had already requested a copy of the conference brochure and had considered attending but decided against it on the grounds of cost. I was therefore delighted when Elaine Lawson, Education and Development Co-ordinator for the SE Wales Branch, informed me that I had won a ticket to attend on one of the conference days.

I work for Screening Services which is part of Public Health Wales Trust and I am currently studying for Chartered membership through the Professional Assessment of Competence with the University of Glamorgan. Although I don't work directly in HR I am a senior manager in the service overseeing the administration function for running the various screening programmes in Wales, so people management and resource planning is key to my role.

The conference day was split into five main sessions with a variety of seminars to choose from during those time slots. You were required to pre-book a seminar in each time slot in advance of the day to guarantee a place.

The sessions I attended were themed around Employee Engagement, High Performance Culture and HR in the Public Sector. The reasons I choose these were because I felt they would support me in the work I'm currently involved with, as well as support my knowledge indicators for completion of some of the standards.

If I had to choose from the day there were two seminars which I particularly enjoyed and found useful.

The first was 'The Rough Guide to Happiness: Bringing to Life the skills of well – being for major improvements in our personal and professional worlds'.

This was led by Dr Nick Baylis a Cambridge University trained Doctor of Psychology. He was a very motivational speaker and re-enforced the benefits of 'balance' in anyone's life. With today's emphasis around stress management in the workplace, I came away feeling that the type of stress management training organisations need to be delivered is something that staff can really take away with them on a personal, as well as professional perspective. What a shame every organisation couldn't have a Dr Baylis to put things back in perspective, but he did provide all delegates with a copy of his new book!

The second seminar was 'All you need is love'. This session was led by Mark Adlestone, Managing Director of Beaverbrook's the Jewellers. Beaverbrook's was voted the Best Company to Work For in 2009 so a useful benchmark in employee

engagement. What was interesting about this seminar was to learn about Beaverbrook's culture. It adopts a hands-on, trust-based approach and an emphasis on improving the commitment to their employees to achieve organisation success. Internal promotion is a key element to this family based business and their vision is to buy people into the culture. The Company has faced some challenging times and has successfully implemented a pay freeze and cut back on workforce numbers through natural wastage. The key to implementing this was through employee engagement with continual good communication. The message given was if an organisation is transparent and honest with its workforce people can deal with the truth however unpleasant that may be.

My overall impression from the day was that it was run extremely efficiently. As a delegate the timeslots were well planned, adequate information and help was available on the day and the variety of exhibitors were useful and an excellent way to spend your time between seminars!

I would definitely consider attending again next year.

Alison Dorras