

Quick News Digest from IT Skills Research (Oct 07)

The Training Camp, which was IT training company of the year in 2006 and 2007, has changed its name to **Firebrand Training**: the change comes after 6 years of strong growth, enabling the owners to bring its franchise relationship to an end and establish an independent company. **Global Knowledge** has signed a partnership agreement with service management specialist Fox IT to provide learning services and consultancy for corporate and public sector clients. **Maven Training** has announced a partnership with the University of Westminster to provide PRINCE2 project management training for students in the university's School of Informatics. And the **Institution of Engineering and Technology** (IET) and Cisco have announced an agreement allowing holders of a Cisco certification to receive fast-track entry to IET membership.

The British Computer Society has revealed the finalists for its **2007 IT Industry Awards**; finalists in the IT Trainer of the Year category include candidates from QA-IQ, Xpertise Training, Learning Tree International (2), LogicaCMG and five other providers. The finalists have also been announced for this year's **E-learning Awards**, organised by e-learning age; among those short-listed for the eleven awards are Academy Internet, Atlantic Link, Epic, MyKnowledgeMap, RedTray, Saffron Interactive and ThirdForce. And **Happy Computers** has been shortlisted in the business-to-business section of the 2007 UK Customer Experience awards.

Assima has secured its first contract in China – with Ping An, the country's largest insurance company – less than two months after announcing its expansion into the Asia Pacific region. **Information Transfer** has won business from three more new clients – PZ Cussons, Trinity-Chiesi, and Interserve – to develop e-learning solutions, and has developed a course on financial management for Leeds Teaching Hospitals, the NHS's largest Trust. And BT has extended its uptake of **Atlantic Link's** rapid e-learning software tools, rolling them out to its BT Retail subsidiary.

It's been a busy month for people on the move in the industry. KnowledgePool has made three new appointments: **Lindsay Grieve** joins from Centrica as COO, **Sean Craig** has been promoted to Head of Client Relationship Management, and **Suzanne Brewer** is Head of Customer Services. **Brightwave** has appointed a new account manager, Carl Mason (formerly of Thomson NETg), and a Project Account Manager, Victoria Cooper, while its technical department is now headed by Paul Burns, who was previously Development Manager at Futuremedia. **Huw Williams**, formerly of Amdahl Education, has taken on the European franchise (excluding UK) of Verhoef Training. And **Alistair Morrison**, previously with Skillchange Systems, Vega and Lorien Customer Focus, has joined Echelon as a non-executive director.

Among new launches, **QA-IQ** has introduced ITIL version 3 bridging courses for the Foundation and Manager's Certificates, aimed at holders of certification from earlier ITIL versions. **Assima** has unveiled new versions of its Training Suite, Tutorial Content Builder and Performance Suite, and is launching a new Change Management Suite. The **Oracle Education Foundation** has launched ThinkQuest International 2008, a global project learning competition open to students aged 9-19 from around the world. And **e-skills UK** is offering a free online guide for employers, the Training and Development Guide, highlighting funded or subsidised ICT training and development opportunities in the UK.

There has been further evidence of the bullish market conditions in the industry, in the UK and worldwide. **ILX Group** has issued a positive trading update to the City, and says bookings into 2008 are well ahead of the same period last year. According to its latest quarterly results, **Oracle's** global Education revenues were up 23% on the same quarter

last year. **SkillSoft**'s revenues were up 28%, helped by the completion of its acquisition of NETg in May, with UK revenues up 17%. And **Learning Tree** has reported increased revenue again for the fifth consecutive quarter, with profits up significantly.

Finally, on the research front, the TUC says Britain's employers must act to close the **training divide** between graduate and unskilled workers: its research shows that last year 41% of graduate employees took part in work-based learning compared to only 12% of their colleagues who left school without any qualifications. It also found that 35% of UK employers systematically fail to offer their staff any training at work. The Association of Technology Staffing Companies says there is a **shortage of software engineers** experienced in developing for platforms such as Windows Mobile, and it predicts this pressure will increase with the launch of the iPhone. Knowledge Solutions says a growing **training and support gap** in the UK's 6,000 contact centres is costing the industry £2.53 billion in unnecessary time and resources. And QA-IQ's research suggests that 70% of companies are waiting for **Service Pack 1** to be released for Microsoft's Windows Vista before beginning deployment – but QA-IQ says they should already be putting in place the skills that their teams will need to deploy and support the new operating system.

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