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Leading learning and skills

## Dorset Prepares for the World Stage Training Evaluation Report June 2008

The Market Research Group  
Bournemouth University  
Dorset House  
Fern Barrow  
Talbot Campus  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH12 5BB  
UK

Info@themarketresearchgroup.co.uk  
01202 961380





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# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Employers

- Response to the 'Welcoming Our World' training within the Employer sample was **very positive overall**.
- Motivation for attending the training tended to be based on **practical immediate training requirements** rather than a perceived need to look ahead and prepare for 2012. However, the importance of the Olympic Games is clearly filtering through, especially amongst those who already have regular contact with international visitors.
- There was a general feeling that **any** free and well targeted training was an opportunity not to be missed. Most of the companies involved in the training are small and saving money is very important.
- Reasons for course take-up varied according to the training chosen. For example, **Welcome International** attendees wished to generally improve their communication with international visitors, **Welcome on a Plate** attendees were concerned with food safety compliance, while **Welcome Jurassic Host** attendees were keen to learn more about the local area so that they could answer visitor questions more thoroughly.
- The courses were thought to be generally enjoyable, well delivered, useful and worthwhile. The key areas of impact were:
  - compliance with legislation
  - customer communication
  - customer service
  - increased confidence and motivation amongst staff
  - improved management skills
- The main impact of the training was seen in the individual who took part, where an increase in **confidence** at work was particularly apparent. This increased confidence often had the positive knock-on effect of an improvement in **customer service**. This was chiefly true of new or junior members of staff who had more to benefit from the learning experience overall.
- An unexpected benefit of attending the courses was the opportunity to **network** with other local businesses and exchange information and ideas which, for some individuals, was just as important as the training itself.

## 1.2 Volunteers

- Response to the 'Team Dorset' training was **less positive overall**. This was not a comment on the quality of the courses offered, but rather a result of high 2012 information-led expectations amongst volunteers.
- The 'Team Dorset' volunteers are mostly individuals who are already actively involved in volunteering in the community. Their key motivation in volunteering for 2012 was to be involved in the Olympic Games, fuelled partially by an interest in sport in some cases, but also by a **strong emotional pull** towards a large and globally important, cross-cultural event.
- The volunteers entered into the 'Team Dorset' training with **high expectations of specialised training and detailed information** about events, logistics and their own unique role in making 2012 a success. There is a feeling that these expectations of specific 2012-oriented training and information have not, so far, been met.
- The 'Team Dorset' training offered is considered good and worthwhile in its own right and useful for topping up skills for use in existing volunteer work, as well as potentially, for 2012. However, **the training is considered too general and not tailored to 2012 events**. There was an expectation of learning about, for example, first aid within the 2012 scenario rather than in a general sense which might be applicable to any situation. There is comparatively little complaint about the training per se. The real problem is the perceived lack of an Olympic context for the learning.
- In addition, there is a pervading **sense of not knowing what happens next** amongst many volunteers. The volunteers need more information on 'Team Dorset' and their individual role within that team.
- There is a clear need to **keep up momentum** within the 2012 volunteer movement to maintain existing levels of interest and commitment.
- In summary, the 'Team Dorset' volunteers require:
  - **specific 2012 orientation**
  - **more information on logistics within the local team**
  - **more information on their own role within the team**

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

Following the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games bid, which includes Dorset as host venue for the sailing events, comes the opportunity to showcase the area to a world-wide audience.

Within this context, the Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership (DNFTP), in association with the Dorset Retail Skill Shop, has developed the **Welcoming our World Customer Care Campaign**, to help drive up the quality of the customer experience in the area, in readiness for the 2012 events.

Through this campaign, those in retail, tourism and hospitality were invited onto free customer care related training courses. The training was funded by the European Social Fund and the Learning and Skills Council.

The training included the following courses:

- Welcome on a Plate
- Introduction to Management
- Welcome Management
- Welcome International
- Welcome All
- E-Marketing
- Customer Service in a Retail Environment
- Product Range Planning
- Visual merchandising

In addition, the Welcoming our World Campaign recruited **'Team Dorset Volunteer Leaders'** to help in staging and hosting the many significant events before and beyond 2012.

Various free training courses were provided including:

- City and Guilds Introduction to Trainer Skills
- Health and Safety – CIEH Foundation Certificate
- Emergency First Aid – ASET accredited
- Welcome International – NCFE accredited
- Welcome All – NCFE accredited

The training programme ran from October 2007 until the end of June 2008.

## 2.2 Aims and Objectives

The DNFTP commissioned the Market Research Group to conduct an evaluation of the free training courses offered under the umbrella of the Welcoming our World Campaign.

The study was split into two sections:

- one part involving the employers who sent staff on Customer Care Training (**Employer Sample**)
- the other focusing on 'Team Dorset Volunteer Leaders' (**Volunteer Sample**)

The project sought to achieve the following objectives:

### Employers

- To identify motivations for attending the training, including the fact that it was free
- To assess spontaneous reactions on the impact of the training
- To provide an indication of the effect of the training on both the individual who attended and the company as a whole

### Volunteers

- To identify motivations for attending the training, including the fact that it was free
- To specifically examine whether Volunteers were motivated by 2012 Events, to add to current volunteering skills or for personal use
- To assess spontaneous reactions on the impact of the training
- To discover how Volunteers were now intending to use their skills

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample

The sample, as provided by the DNFTP, was split into two sections:

- one part covering employers who attended/sent staff on Customer Care Training (**Employer Sample**)
- the other focusing on 'Team Dorset Volunteer Leaders' (**Volunteer Sample**)

The following interviews were conducted:

##### **Employers: 40 Interviews in Total**

- all companies involved in tourism, retail and hospitality
- with less than 250 employees
- who had sent staff on one or more of the following courses:

Course	Number of Respondents Who Attended
Welcome on a Plate (WP)	15
Welcome International (WI)	11
Introduction to Management (CMI)	9
Welcome Jurassic Host	6
Welcome Host	4
Welcome Management	3
Customer Service in a Retail Environment	1
Welcome Line	1

##### **Volunteers: 20 Interviews in Total**

- a random selection of individuals within the Volunteer database supplied by the DNFTP who had completed one or more of the following courses:

Course	Number of Respondents Who Attended
Introduction to Trainer Skills	12
Welcome International	7
Emergency First Aid	5
Health and Safety	5
Welcome Management	1
Welcome All	1

The small sample is not statistically valid and therefore, the qualitative nature of this research study has been emphasised.



## **3.2 Data Collection**

Telephone interviewing was employed as the most effective method of gathering data from both the Employer and Volunteer Samples.

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to elicit answers to specific questions, whilst also allowing respondents the freedom to be more spontaneous and provide more comprehensive answers as appropriate.

A copy of the questionnaire is appended to this document.

## **3.3 Analysis**

All questionnaires were hand-analysed at the Market Research Group.

Basic data tables were constructed from pre-coded questions, showing the number of times each response was given (not percentage results).

The responses to open-ended questions were listed and grouped by commonality. These common responses are shown as simple data tables with the number of times each is mentioned.

Pertinent quotations from respondents are included throughout the report to illustrate different points.

## 4. Main Findings

### 4.1 Employer Sample

These results represent the findings from the 40 interviews with employers and managers who attended/sent staff on one or more of the Welcoming our World Customer Care Campaign free training courses.

#### 4.1.1 Awareness of Training

Most respondents first heard about the training via a mailing. There was some detailed recall of the 'Welcoming our World' leaflet, including listed course content. Rather fewer respondents recalled receiving an email prompting them to look at the training (7 out of 40)

##### Q1. How did you hear about the course?

	(base) <b>40</b>
	(number of mentions)
Mailing	23
Email	7
Word of Mouth/Friend/Colleague	5
Launch event	4
Website (DNFTP)	1
Newspaper	0
Other	5

Five respondents mentioned that their friends or partners had already undertaken some of the training courses and recommended them to sign up. Four had attended launch events.

The 'Other' responses are listed below:

- Business Link
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Poole Council meeting minutes
- New Start-Up seminar
- Attended training in previous job

## 4.1.2 Motivation for Attending Course

The motivation for sending someone on a course varied greatly depending on the course chosen and the nature of business of the respondent. From a qualitative point of view, there was a general feeling that **any** training offered, especially if free of charge and targeted at their business sector, must surely be worth attending even if there was relatively little to be gained.

However, as the later results show, the majority of respondents ultimately felt the courses to be very worthwhile and useful.

### Q2. What made you decide to send someone on this course?

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
Dealing with more foreign visitors (WI)	9
New job/role for me/staff	9
Need to keep up to date with legislation, esp. hygiene/ food (WP)	9
Thought it would be generally useful	8
Need to constantly update skills	6
Staff are first contact for visitors - important to set tone	5
Co. policy to invest in training	5
Visitors ask questions about local area (WJH)	4
Know someone who went on course	3
I went on another similar course	2
Important to gear up for 2012	3
Wanted new ideas	2
Info on local produce (WP)	2
Networking opportunity	1

Unsurprisingly, those who attended the **Welcome International** course said they had noticed increased regular contact with international visitors and felt they needed to improve their language skills. The prospect of an influx of international visitors in 2012 has functioned to focus minds and has prompted even reluctant linguists to make some attempt at greetings in different languages. This was seen as particularly important for hotels and guest houses:

*"I had the Olympics in mind with more international visitors. I'm mindful that I can't converse in any European language at all!"* (Guest House, WI)

*"We sent 3 receptionists and the head receptionist. The front line staff greet customers from all over the world and first impressions are all important."* (Hotel, WI)

*"In any business you need to update your knowledge on customer care. We will have increased visitors from the Far East and different cultures in 2012."* (Guest House, WI)

Those involved in transportation also showed some responsibility as the first point of contact for international visitors:

*“I thought it would be good for the town. I pick up more foreign visitors these days and I thought it [the course] would help me talk to them.” (Taxi Driver, WI)*

Those who chose to attend the **Welcome on a Plate** course were chiefly motivated by a perceived need to keep up to date with legislation concerning food safety and hygiene. For these respondents, it is important to display a food safety award on the wall for visitors to see and feel a sense of reassurance that all is well behind the scenes:

*“I run a small hotel and I like to keep on top of everything. I have a gold certificate for hygiene and I want to keep it up.” (B&B, WP)*

*“I hadn’t done a health and hygiene course before. It was revision for me to keep up to date on legislation concerning food preparation and storage.” (Small Hotel, WP)*

There was also some interest in finding out more about local sourcing of food which was mentioned in the **Welcome on a Plate** course information.

As might be expected, the main motivation for attending the **Welcome Jurassic Host** course was to gain more detailed information about the local area. This information is needed in order to answer visitor questions more fully and so enhance the visitor experience. Respondents talked of being used as a source of local information and some felt uncomfortably aware of gaps in their knowledge of the surrounding area.

*“Where we are situated near the harbour and beach, we do supply a lot of info for tourists. If customers are waiting for their meal, they see posters and ask questions ...people are really greedy for this info, say about Kimmeridge. I passed it every day on my way to work but I didn’t know enough about it.” (Restaurant, WJH)*

Local people do not necessarily have an encyclopaedic knowledge of geological and other facts that visitors often ask about. This course provided an ideal opportunity to learn more about the Jurassic Coast area and so respond more fully to questions and take the initiative in recommending days out and so on:

*“We get a lot of holidaymakers come to the park and they always ask us questions about the area – buses, fossils, where they can go, different areas and so on. I don’t always know what to tell them. Although I’m from the local area, I don’t know the sort of information that tourists often ask.” (Family Attraction, WJH)*

Many of the less course-specific responses about motivations for choosing courses focused on a need to train **new staff or staff in a new role** (9 mentions).

*"[a member of staff] had previously been the shop manager and then took over the café as well. She had some limited experience of catering but my other staff had none – they all needed training in this area."* (Family Attraction, WP)

*"I thought it would be useful as this is a new job for me. It's made me more aware of things."* (B&B, WP)

Additionally, a few of the respondents were part of new start-up companies and were keen to take up any training offered, as well as meet other people in similar businesses and build new relationships:

*"I wanted to go on the course because we set up self-catering accommodation last year specifically for people with disabilities. We wanted to have something behind us in case anyone questioned our abilities. It's all a learning curve so it's good to interact with other people coming from other directions and exchange ideas – there was a fair bit of networking going on."* (S/C accommodation, WA)

Another motivation in choosing this training was the simple notion that **'it would be generally useful'** (8 mentions) or it might address **'the need to constantly update skills'** (6 mentions):

*"I'm relatively new to management and, heading up my own company under FSA rules, we need to provide management information, structures and procedures which are a regulatory requirement."* (IFA, CMI)

5 respondents made the point that it was important to **train 'front line' staff** such as receptionists who might be the first point of contact for visitors and should strive to make a positive first impression.

*"I'm a firm believer in training the person undertaking the 'front of house' job who was newly promoted within the pub."* (Pub, WP)

Another 5 respondents said that it was their **'company policy to invest in training'** and accordingly, any training would be considered and taken up if considered relevant.

Other reasons for choosing to attend these training courses included:

- **having attended a similar course previously or knowing someone who went on a similar course** (5 mentions combined)
- a desire to **'gear up for 2012'** (3 mentions)
- a need for **'new ideas'** (2 mentions)

### 4.1.3 Importance of Free Course

Nearly all the respondents said that it was important that the course was free, with most saying it was 'very important' (26 mentions out of 40).

#### Q3. How important was it that the course was free?

	(base) <b>40</b>
	(number of mentions)
Very important	26
Quite important	13
Not very important	1
Not at all important	0

Most of the course attendees are small businesses and are very aware of their outgoings. Any savings are desirable and appreciated:

*"As a small business this plays a great part. I have to grasp these opportunities."*

*(Restaurant, WJH)*

*"It cost me a lot to get my licence and I had to buy my partner out – so yes, it was very important that it was free."*

*(Small hotel, WP)*

Many of those who said it was 'quite important' that the course was free, made the point that they would have been happy to pay a small fee and that the quality of the course was more important. The fact that the course was free was a bonus.

*"It was great that it was free but we would have gone anyway." (B&B, WP)*

*"Yes it's quite important that the course was free but the integrity of the course is more important."*

*(Hotel, WP)*

#### 4.1.4 Awareness of Course Funding

Around half the sample (21 out of 40) said they did not know which organisation had funded the training.

#### Q4. Do you know which organisation funded the course?

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
No/Don't know	21
Other (listed)	9
DNFTP	8
Learning and Skills Council	1
European Social Fund	1

8 respondents suggested the courses were funded by the **Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership** – a natural assumption since the research was introduced as being on behalf of the DNFTP and this was probably in the back of respondent minds. There was one mention of the **'Learning and Skills Council'**.

Only one respondent correctly stated that the training was funded by the **'European Social Fund'** – this was a hotelier providing a venue for one of the courses, who had perhaps benefited from some extra information. Interestingly, 4 of the 'other' responses at this question included the word 'European' so there was evidently some distant recall, albeit incorrect, of an organisation of this nature. The 'other' responses are listed below:

- EEC
- 'European-something...the lady did tell us'
- European Union
- European funding
- Olympic Committee
- Something to do with Olympic bid?
- Government funded
- The College

## 4.1.5 Consideration of Other Courses

### Q5. Did you also consider similar courses run by other organisations?

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
No	33
Yes	7

The majority of respondents (33 out of 40) did not consider similar courses run by other organisations. The general feeling was that the DNFTP courses were well-targeted, free and run by a known and trusted body, so there was no need to look elsewhere.

*"I felt this course was going to the core of what we do. It was also local and easy to get to."*  
(S/C accommodation, WA)

*"The DNFTP are very good and we've got to know the trainers who are very experienced and informative."* (Large Hotel, WI, WA, WM)

*"We just look at DNFTP and partners' courses – they give us what we need to know."*  
(Holiday Group, WA, WH)

*"There's a really good mix of DNFTP courses available without looking elsewhere."*  
(Holiday Park, WM, WI, WJH, CSRE)

Those who said they had looked at other courses tended to be either searching for something quite specialised or interested in comparing the quality of courses on offer.

*"I looked at the FSA and Reed Recruitment who run similar courses but costs for a new start-up business are prohibitive."* (IFA, CMI)

*"We have used other companies for catering and disabled access type courses because we like to compare."* (Hotel, WP, WM, WA)

*"We looked at 'Handling Difficult People' run by Tourism South East."*  
(Holiday Park, CMI, WI, WA)

Other courses considered included:

- Advanced health and hygiene
- Customer Services
- Internal Best Western courses
- Kingston Maurward College – Customer Care Course



## 4.1.6 Course Impact

Reaction to the training was overwhelmingly positive. The courses were generally enjoyed and considered useful.

A summary of the open-ended responses to this question appears below:

### Q6. What sort of impact has the course had?

Positive Responses	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
Interesting/good/great/fantastic	13
Keeps you up to date with legislation (esp. food safety on WP)	13
Useful	9
Helps us communicate with customers better	8
Tutor good/made it interesting	7
Good for customer care/service info	6
Good for help with languages (WI)	6
Good networking opportunity	6
Helps us answer customer questions (esp. WJH)	5
Increased confidence	4
Good addition to skill set	4
Helps encourage/motivate staff	4
(Really) enjoyed	4
Helps us gear up for 2012 (esp. WI)	4
Good 'refresher' (esp. WP)	3
Good cleaning tips (WP)	3
Good breakfast tips (WP)	3
Keeps you on the ball	3
Good to have and display certificate	2
Helps us manage staff better (CMI)	2
Compounded all I already knew	2
Good for staff to have a day away	2
Helps us understand the access needs of disabled visitors (WA)	2
Good for setting objectives	1
Good for tips/ideas	1
Helps us generate repeat business	1
Role playing useful (WA)	1
Gives a sense of achievement	1
Made me more focused	1
Helped me plan my time better	1
Helped me prioritise	1

Overall, the courses were judged to be interesting and enjoyable, delivered by experienced and well-trained tutors. The training was thought to have a positive impact on staff in the following key areas:

- compliance with legislation
- customer communication
- customer service
- increased confidence and motivation
- improved management skills

Most of those who attended the Welcome on a Plate course were happy to update their food safety knowledge and pick up tips on cleaning and hygiene.

*“It keeps you up to date with legislation on food hygiene...requirements on electrics, water and so on change all the time.” (B&B, WP)*

*“It keeps you on the ball and gives you a few ideas like using different coloured cloths in the bathroom and kitchen.” (Small Hotel, WP)*

Many of the more experienced hoteliers already know the basics of food safety and what is expected of them – for these respondents the course represented an opportunity to refresh their memory. One or two said the course had limited impact for them purely because they had been in the business for so long.

There was some disappointment that the section on local sourcing of food had not been longer and more detailed (3 mentions), particularly amongst those whose main motivating factor in choosing the course was to find out more about local produce.

The **Welcome on a Plate** course had a particular impact on new or junior staff with limited knowledge of food safety issues. The course gave these less experienced attendees a good grounding in food safety so that they understood the need for certain procedures at work and felt more confident in their daily tasks:

*“Environmental Health and food safety is very important to us. The job entails giving a weekly report to our chef – the employees now understand why this procedure is so important for us to maintain standards in food safety.” (Pub, WP)*

*“It gave the staff added confidence and a certificate on food hygiene which gave them a sense of achievement. The certificates are now on the café wall and they are very proud! The course gave them hands on experience supported by classroom schooling.” (Children’s Attraction, WP)*

The language element of the **Welcome International** course was considered very useful and pitched at the right level. The course material, particularly the language CD, was thought to be helpful and a good source of reference in everyday situations at work. This training appeared to really make a difference in the ability of staff to communicate with international visitors and so seemed to have a noticeable effect on customer communication:

*“The course CD on welcoming foreign visitors came in very useful (I had been playing it in the car). I received my first French visitor recently who spoke very little English – the language part of the CD helped greatly and the French guest has stayed again because we were able to communicate.” (B&B, WI)*

The following quotation is from a restaurant owner who attended the **Welcome Jurassic Coast** course and was delighted with the course content and delivery. The course met his expectations entirely and has enabled him to advise visitors in a more professional and enthusiastic way:

*“It was great, really fantastic. An interest of mine anyway – fossils and being local. It’s a great talking point. It opens the eyes of the customers...I can tell people about Old Harry’s Rocks, different rock formations, what about going further down the coast and so on.”*

If anything, Welcome Jurassic Coast attendees would have liked even more information on the local area and less customer-care oriented course material.

The **Introduction to Management** course was well received overall and was thought to have made a valuable contribution to team management as well as individual business skills:

*“The course was good for motivating our volunteers, team working, creating realistic goals, motivating people to fulfil a task and prioritising tasks.” (Holiday Park, CMI)*

*“It’s helped the managers find new directions and made them think outside the box to resolve problems with managing our own staff.” (Retail Outlet, CMI)*

*“I have already applied some of the learning issues in my daily work especially prioritising – I do want to keep my business skills toned and this helped.” (Communications Co, CMI)*

This course, in particular, was also thought to be a positive addition to any CV and might enhance future employment prospects.

The **Welcome All** course was generally well received. It was thought to provide a practical framework for understanding and addressing the needs of disabled visitors. Attendees felt much more confident in this area after the course:

*“We can now advise visitors on access to the BIC and Pavillion nearby. We can understand their needs and problems with access around hotels and Bournemouth generally.” (Large Hotel, WA)*

The few negative comments about this course referred to:

- a lack of information about visitors with learning difficulties
- a feeling that the course was targeted at hotels/restaurants with specific access problems in dining rooms

Overall, an unexpected benefit of the all the courses was the opportunity to network with people in similar businesses. The chance to exchange ideas and build relationships with like-minded people was considered a welcome bonus:

*"It was good to meet other small tourism/catering establishments owners. It's useful to have a forum of other similar establishments where common problems are discussed." (Restaurant, WP)*

*"I now have more contacts in other local hotels. Perhaps this has been more useful than the content of the course for me." (Small Hotel, WP)*

There were comparatively few negative comments about the training, some of which refer to logistical elements like location of venues and parking. One important point to emphasise is the need for training to take place in the 'off-season' when there is more time and flexibility to attend courses.

A summary of the negative responses to this question about course impact appears below:

<b>Course Impact: Negative Responses</b>	<b>(base) 40</b>
	(number of mentions)
More detail required: local food (WP)	3
More detail required: local attractions/info (WJH)	2
More detail required: visitors with learning difficulties (WA)	1
More detail required: too much condensed into one day	1
Timing: need more courses in off-season	3
Location: too far away	1
Location: parking	1
Too many sessions (WP)	2
More geared to hotels/restaurants than my business	2
Catering too basic	1
More pre-course info needed	1
Too much pre-courses paperwork	1
Needs to be held closer to 2012	1

### 4.1.7 Impact of Training on Individual

Respondents were asked if the course had made a difference to the person who attended the training.

The vast majority of respondents said that the course had made a difference to the individual who attended (36 out of 40). The responses to this open-ended question are grouped and summarised below:

#### Q.7 Differences to the Individual

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
Increased confidence	10
Improved communication with international visitors/language skills	7
Improved communication with customers generally	6
Made them/me more aware of health and safety issues	6
Increased motivation	5
Improved customer care	4
Pride in having qualification/certificate to frame	4
Useful tips and ideas to try	2
Networking/formed useful relationships	2
More up to date	1
More organised	1
More informed	1
Staff feel more valued	1
Using new leadership skills	1
Helping us manage staff more effectively	1
Using new local info	1
Helping us plan ahead on our website	1
Made us more aware 2012	1
Helped orient new staff	1
Not really/None (experienced staff on WP/taxi drivers)	4

The main benefits to the course attendee lay in the following key areas:

- increased confidence and motivation
- improved customer communication
- improved customer service
- better knowledge of food safety
- better management skills

An increase in personal confidence was the most apparent change affected by the training.

*“By doing the course, I’m more confident overall. It’s been 10 years since I did any management training and it feels good to have a more solid grounding at work.”*  
(Small retail outlet, CMI)

*“It’s made a huge difference to me. I’m more organised and am implementing the new skills I have learned. It’s given me more confidence in my abilities.”*  
(Educational Trust, CMI)

*“The course made me speak up – I usually sit in the background. The tutor made it easy to speak up and answer questions. I felt more confident about putting my own ideas forward which is very unusual for me.”* (B&B, WP)

Some staff appeared more motivated and interested at work after the training. They feel more valued and so are more willing to make an effort with customer services:

*“The staff are more motivated just by having some training and some time invested in them. They are definitely more informed and up to date.”*  
(Tour Operator, CMI, WA, WI)

*“Not all staff avail themselves to training but those that do courses are more motivated in helping our customers. It improves customer care techniques in this customer-led business.”*  
(Large Hotel, WA)

Customer communication definitely improved amongst those who attended:

- **Welcome International:** attendees were more able to offer greetings and pleasantries in other languages which they had not previously been able to do
- **Welcome Jurassic Host:** attendees were better informed about the Jurassic area and could answer customer queries better and offer recommendations for excursions and so on

*“It’s helped me on a communication level and given me some useful tips. I now have some options on greetings in other languages.”* (Taxi driver, WI)

*“It’s given the staff confidence in talking to guests including foreign visitors with the aid of the languages fact book and cd acting as a reference point...staff practise pleasantries amongst themselves – I heard Chinese spoken at reception the other day!”* (Hotel, WI)

*“I don’t know the area that well, for example, I didn’t know about rainstorms at Charmmouth affecting fossils – that sort of specific information is great to tell people.”*  
(Restaurant, WJH)

## 4.1.8 Impact of Training on Company

The vast majority of respondents said the training had made a difference to their company as a whole (36 out of 40).

The responses to this open-ended question are grouped and summarised below:

### Q.8 Differences to the Company

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
Positive effect on other staff	6
Compliance with legislation very important – helped us	6
More knowledgeable about food safety (WP)	5
Staff more motivated	3
Staff more confident	3
Can answer customer questions better	3
Understand how to greet customers better	2
Has made me more considerate towards customers	2
Portray more professional image	2
Improved my skills	2
Helped us receive international visitors	2
Hopefully will generate repeat business	1
We feel more in control	1
Catering tips from French chef	1
Improved our website	1
Not really/none (experienced staff on WP/taxi drivers)	4

It's interesting to note that one of the key perceived benefits of the training was the 'positive effect on other staff'. The boost in attendee confidence and motivation was thought to affect colleagues and customers alike:

*"As we're a small company, if I'm more confident it filters right through to the customers."*  
(Small retailer, CMI)

*"The new knowledge has cascaded down to the bar managers and other staff."*  
(Pub, WP)

*"The hotel benefits generally from happy, motivated staff."* (Hotel, WA)

One of the knock-on effects of more knowledgeable, confident and motivated staff is an improvement in customer services:

*“Employees feel more valued and wanted and more motivated to please our customers. This gives the company more chance that they will return to stay with us.”*  
(Hotel, WJH)

*“Customer service has definitely improved. I don’t have any figures to support this but I can see it”*  
(Tour Operator, CMI, WA, WI)

*“It’s affected staff enthusiasm and the way that employees view the job. And it’s increased productivity. It’s really good to get away from the workplace into a neutral environment.”*  
(Retail Outlet, CMI)

As we have seen in the results to the previous question, a more informed staff can better deal with customer questions and be proactive about recommendations to optimise the visitor experience. This can confer the feeling of belonging to a local team:

*“I’m more confident in dealing with the public now and answering their questions on the local area. This has a direct effect on the business. I’m using the information I learned all the time.”*  
(Children’s Farm, WJH)

*“I think being able to give out information is really invaluable. The customer says ‘Is there anything we should be looking at locally? Where can we go today?’ I like being part of the team locally.”*  
(Restaurant, WJH)

A more practical consequence of attending the training was seen amongst the Welcome on a Plate attendees who simply felt more informed about important food safety information:

*“Without this sort of training we wouldn’t be able to meet legal requirements on food safety and hygiene.”*  
(Hotel, WP)

*“I’m a lot more on top of things, I keep the paperwork up and do more regular checks in the kitchen. I feel more in control of what I need to do.”*  
(B&B, WP)



### 4.1.9 Was Training Worthwhile?

Nearly all respondents said they felt the training was worthwhile, with three-quarters of the sample saying it was 'very worthwhile' (30 out of 40).

#### Q9. Would you say the course was...?

	(base) <b>40</b>
	(number of mentions)
Very worthwhile	30
Quite worthwhile	9
Not very worthwhile	1
Not at all worthwhile	0

One respondent who had attended the Welcome Jurassic Host course felt he had now effectively become an ambassador for the region and that his restaurant was now an 'information destination':

*"I'm not just a fish and chip shop now - I'm an information source."*

Many of those who said the training was 'quite worthwhile', were already experienced in the course content and felt that a newcomer would probably get more out of the whole experience.

*"From where we were coming from it was worthwhile, but more useful perhaps for others, for example a regular hotel not geared up for disabled people."  
(S/C Accommodation for Disabled Visitors, WA)*

*"It's good for people coming into the trade but I've already done it for so long."  
(Hotel, WP)*

Only one respondent considered that the training was 'not very worthwhile'. This was a taxi driver who had expected the Welcome Host course to consist exclusively of information on local attractions and events.

#### 4.1.10 Future Training Needs

Over half of the respondents (25 out of 40) said they had further training needs.

##### Q10. Do you have any future training needs?

	(base) 40
	(number of mentions)
Yes	25
No	15

These further training needs are grouped and listed below:

- New staff need training all the time/ongoing (10)
- Accounting e.g. Sage (5)
- Customer service (4)
- Health/Hygiene (3)
- Website design (2)
- IT (2)
- Reception/telephone skills (2)
- 2012 orientation tools (2)
- Marketing (1)
- Language skills (1)
- General business skills (1)
- Anything offered! (1)
- Anything on local area (1)
- Something aimed at helping charities (1)
- Sales/promotion (1)
- CMI (1)
- Employment law (1)
- Safety (1)
- Maintenance related (1)
- Any kitchen-related (1)
- Any housekeeping related (1)

## 4.2 2012 Volunteers

These results represent the findings from the 20 interviews with volunteers who attended one or more of the free 'Team Dorset Volunteer Leaders' training courses.

### 4.2.1 Awareness of Training

Many of the Volunteer Sample are already involved in volunteering in their local community, so unsurprisingly, most first heard about the 'Team Dorset' training through friends and colleagues or via their volunteer organisation.

#### Q1. How did you hear about the course?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
Word of Mouth/Friend/Colleague	7
Volunteer Organisation	6
Mailing	3
Newspaper (Echo)	3
Website	2
Volunteer Coffee Morning	1
Other	3

## 4.2.2 Motivation for Attending Training

The main motivation for attending the Team Dorset training was an existing involvement or interest in volunteering, combined with a desire to be involved in 2012.

### Q2a. What made you decide to go on this course?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
Interested in volunteering generally	13
Want to be involved in the Olympics	9
Live/work close to Olympic venue	4
Wanted to change job/advance career	3
Wanted to gain extra skills	3
Interested in using my linguistic skills	2
Interested in sport/sailing	2
Am retired/have more time	2
Am unemployed/want to keep busy	1
Interested in tourism	1
Interested in arts/culture side to 2012	1
First Aid useful for my children	1
Am an Olympian	1

From a qualitative point of view, the prospect of being associated with the Olympics prompted a strong emotional response, carrying with it an aura of civic responsibility and being of local, national and international importance.

*"I was interested to do some voluntary work for the Olympics first and foremost. I do voluntary work for the blind already."*

*"I'm very interested in the Olympics. I already work with volunteers and I live in Dorchester near to the Games' venue."*

*"I've been involved with volunteering for some while in the community. I'm attracted by the Olympic games – especially the arts and culture side which will accompany the Games."*

On a more rational level, there was a small core of respondents who were less interested in 2012 and more motivated by enhancing their CVs with additional training.

*"I wanted to get extra skills. I want a change of direction from working in a restaurant and I'd really like to help out with the Olympics."*

*"I have an interest in tourism and I want to get better trained to advance my career."*

*"I really wanted to top up my linguistic and people skills."*

Unemployed or retired individuals especially welcomed the opportunity to be involved in something worthwhile.

*"I recently retired from a management position in a bank. I now have more time available and I'm interested in volunteering. I also like sports generally and am particularly interested in the Olympics in Dorset."*

*"I'm out of work at the moment. I wanted to do some voluntary work to keep busy that would also show willing to a prospective employer."*

A minority of volunteers were keen sportspeople themselves, one even an Olympian:

*"I'm a keen sailor in Dorset. I have a second home near Weymouth close to some of the sailing venues."*

*"I am an Olympian – I ran in the 1960s Games. I wanted to help with volunteer work and I wanted to be involved in the Olympics."*

### 4.2.3 Main Motivation for Attending Course

Respondents found it hard to choose just one of the options given at this question as motivations for attending training.

#### Q2b. Would you say that one of the main reasons for going on the course was...?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
To get involved in 2012	16
To brush up on your skills for other volunteer work	12
To brush up on your skills for general personal use	10

Most respondents said that their primary incentive for course take-up was 'to get involved in 2012' (16 mentions out of 20). The majority of these respondents also considered that the skills learned for 2012 would inevitably help 'to brush up on skills for other volunteer work' (12 mentions out of 20), though this was seen as a side benefit, not a primary call to action.

Courses with a general practical application, like **Emergency First Aid** and **Health and Safety** were thought to be particularly helpful 'for general personal use' (10 mentions out of 20). Courses with broad customer service or managerial content, such as **Introduction to Trainer Skills** or **Welcome International/All** that might enhance a CV, also fell into this category of 'general personal use'.

#### 4.2.4 Importance that Course was Free?

Nearly all respondents said that it was important that the course was free, with half saying it was 'very important' (10 mentions out of 20).

#### Q3. How important was it that the course was free?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
Very important	10
Quite important	9
Not very important	1
Not at all important	0

The general feeling was that volunteers should not have to pay for training, especially since many are not currently employed and cannot afford to pay for it.

*"It's very important that it was free as I'm giving my time. I'm also lucky that I have a sympathetic employer."*

*"Maybe I wouldn't have done the course if it wasn't free – it prompted me into action."*

*"I'm unemployed and on benefits. I couldn't afford to self-fund."*

A minority would have paid a nominal fee for training, especially if it added to their skill set on their CV.

*"It's nice that it was free but since I wanted to help out anyway, I would have paid with a discount maybe."*

*"I would have paid, especially for a more drawn out course of say, 4 days, because it added to my skills."*

## 4.2.5 Funding of Course

The Team Dorset Volunteers were more likely than the Employer Sample to know which organisation funded the training (5 mentioned the European Social Fund, 2 mentioned the Learning and Skills Council).

This may be due, in part, to the greater level of personal involvement of each volunteer in finding out about the background to the training.

### Q4. Do you know which organisation funded the course?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
No/Don't know	6
European Social Fund	5
DNFTP	4
Other (listed)	3
Learning and Skills Council	2

The three other responses mentioned here were:

- Government funding (2)
- Tourist Board

#### 4.2.6 Consideration of Other Courses

The vast majority of respondents did not also consider other courses run by other organisations (16 said 'no' out of 20).

##### Q5. Did you also consider similar courses run by other organisations?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
No	16
Yes	4

Most simply heard about this specific training and decided to take part, rather than weighing up other alternatives.

The few who looked at other training mentioned various first aid courses with St. John's Ambulance and other community groups.



## 4.2.7 Opinion of Training

In general, the training was thought to be good and well delivered by a professional tutor. The opportunity to meet other Volunteers was also an important part of the training experience.

<b>Opinion of Course: Positive Responses</b>	<b>(base) 20</b>
	(number of mentions)
Tutor good/professional/nice	12
Excellent/very/good	8
Good interaction with other course attendees	6
Good language CD/book (WI)	3
Good tips on presentation skills	2
Increased my confidence	2
Good for other volunteer work	2
Interesting/informative	2
First Aid very useful	2
Health and safety very good	1
Professional	1
I learned a lot	1

*"It did what it said on the tin as far as organising and motivating other volunteers."*

*"All the other people were around my age and the interaction between course members was really good."*

*"The tutor was friendly and pleasant and integrated everyone."*

The courses focusing on First Aid and Health and Safety were thought to be generally good and useful. The Welcome International and Welcome All courses were similarly thought to be worthwhile, though perhaps more targeted at hotels and restaurants than volunteers.

## Opinion of Course: Negative Responses

(base)  
20

	(number of mentions)
What happens next/need a progression	7
Disliked presentation component (ITS)	7
Too general/not 2012 specific	6
Wasn't what I expected	4
Course materials designed for licensed trade (ITS)	3
Disliked exam component (ITS)	3
Out of my depth/not confidence inspiring	2
Only wanted to be a basic volunteer	2
Too much pre-course work (ITS)	2
Need to practise skills – how?	2
Objectives not clear	1
Too long	1
Don't know if I'm qualified to be a volunteer	1

There were rather more negative than positive responses at this question, not referring to the quality of the training – which was thought to be good – but to the lack of a 2012 context.

*“It was too general. We need to look at specific case studies within events running. We need more focus on volunteering and the team leading aspect needs to be more relevant to specific tasks, like Olympic back-up tasks.”*

*“The training needs to be more Olympic-specific. It's too general or more oriented towards tourism.”*

*“The courses were good but needed to be more specific to train ‘team leaders’. The general overview is OK but what should the team leaders be doing in 2012? Tailor the course more towards that. The tutors didn't seem to know exactly what their brief should be.”*

*“It wasn't what I expected. It was advertised to be around events volunteering but it was too general.”*

*“It was a mixed message really. The course was more for tourism than directly for Olympics. It made me and others on the course disappointed. General points about welcoming overseas visitors or those with disabilities were catered for but it wasn't very sport-related.” (WI, WA)*

In addition to the perceived lack of 2012 specific information, many respondents felt they needed some sort of progression or follow-up. Volunteers need to know what happens next. Do they require more training? How will they fit into 'Team Dorset'? What is their unique role? How can they practise their skills?

Many Volunteers appeared to have more questions than answers at this stage

*"No feedback so far on how to progress as a possible volunteer and help Dorset build up to the Games."*

*"I want to get involved with the Olympics movement but I'm in limbo at the moment as to how exactly I can help."*

*"No particular follow-ups and I haven't heard a thing since the courses finished."*

*"I'm not sure what's expected of me in 2012 – could I deliver? Yes, probably but I need more guidance and training for specific tasks if I have to manage other volunteers."*

*"I need some follow up – mainly new challenges to practice the skills I've learnt so far."*

*"The big issue is that I need a progression. Do I know enough to train others? Have I got enough skills? Perhaps I will have to do more volunteering to get practice."*

There were more negative comments about the **Introduction to Trainer Skills** course than about any other – in part because there was an expectation of 2012 specific training skills here (NB: 12 out of the 20 Volunteers attended this course – more than attended any other course). Another area which split respondents was the '**Presentation Skills**' component of the course. While a few Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to learn presentation skills, many others felt either daunted by the prospect of public speaking or felt they already had these skills.

*"I'm not sure how much we got out of other people's presentations. The course could really have been condensed into 1 day. I'm confident in this area anyway because of my work experience. It was more relevant perhaps to attendees who did not have any previous management or presentational experience."*

*"I didn't realise before attendance that we had to do a presentation ourselves and that there was an exam. It wasn't what I expected and it wasn't explained beforehand."*

*"I only wanted to be a basic volunteer – the objective of the course about training trainers wasn't made clear. I didn't realise that we had to do a presentation ourselves and that there was a written exam."*

*"Maybe it was pitched too high with presentations to do."*

*"There was no indication about presentation when I signed up for the course. This did phase some people."*

## 4.2.8 Use of Skills

Respondents were asked how they hoped to use the skills they had learned on the courses. The table below details results to this question:

### Q7. How are you hoping to use the skills you've learned on the course?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
To get involved in 2012	10
To brush up on your skills for other volunteer work	11
To brush up on your skills for general personal use	4

Half the sample said they hoped to use their new skills 'to get involved in 2012' (10 out of 20) but this was a significantly lower figure than at Q2b. where 16 respondents out of 20 said their main reason for attending the training was to 'get involved in 2012'.

This disparity represents a slight level of disenchantment with the 'Team Dorset' programme amongst some respondents. They had set out on the programme with 2012 firmly in mind but after training, they had lost some of their Olympic focus. Many felt their new skills were more applicable to general volunteer work or personal use.

*"I need more skills that are relevant to the 2012 events. I want to know what happens next to follow up. I need to know how many 'team leaders' etc. and volunteers are required. What about specific tasks like managing car parks and showing overseas visitors around? What happens next?" (ITS, EFS, WI)*

*"A couple of other course members also thought it wasn't that relevant (ITS course). Others were viewing the attendance as an entry on their CV and were only after the certificate."*

## 4.2.9 Was Training Worthwhile?

All respondents thought the training was worthwhile, with most (14 out of 20) saying the courses were 'very worthwhile'.

### Q8. Would you say the course was...?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
Very worthwhile	14
Quite worthwhile	6
Not very worthwhile	0
Not at all worthwhile	0

There was comparatively little complaint about the training per se. The real problem was the perceived lack of an Olympic context for the learning.

*"The health and safety course was good for refreshing my memory but not specific enough for the Olympics or major events volunteering."*

As in the Employer sample, an unexpected bonus was the chance to meet and chat with other volunteers and hear about their experiences.

*"As much as anything else, half the benefit was in meeting people of a similar mind and also the organisers, to get to grips with what is required."*

#### 4.2.10 Attendance at Award Event

Respondents were asked if they had attended an awards event at the Sailing Academy and if so, what they thought of it.

Only five respondents out of 20 had managed to attend, though many more said that they regretted not being able to attend due to family, work or other commitments.

#### Q9. Did you recently attend the event at the Sailing Academy where certificates were given out?

	(base) <b>20</b>
	(number of mentions)
Yes	15
No	5

Those who had attended the event were **extremely positive** about the occasion. It was regarded as a ideal opportunity to meet other volunteers and pick up additional information about 2012.

*"It was really fantastic. Very worthwhile and we received an inspirational talk."*

*"It was enjoyable and good to meet others who had done the course and find out more information."*

*"It really filled in the background to the event. It was good to meet other volunteers and share experiences."*

*"It was a very worthwhile event. It was great to meet like minded possible volunteers and I gathered a good overview from the other organisations attending. It widened the scope of what is required between now and 2012."*

## 4.2.11 Future Training Needs

Three-quarters of the Volunteer Sample said that they have future training needs (15 out of 20).

### Q10. Do you have any future training needs?

	(base) 20
	(number of mentions)
Yes	15
No	5

These training needs tended to be 2012-specific courses and detailed information on co-ordination and opportunities to try out first aid and other skills. Volunteers feel they need to be told if they require more training in order to become a fully qualified 2012 team leader.

*“Any courses geared at helping volunteers for 2012.”*

*“It would have to be Olympic-specific. I’m a trained doctor, now retired, but I could assist in a medical capacity.”*

*“I would like to do add-on courses in first aid and health and safety. The training needs to be more joined up as head towards 2012.”*

*“I would like to know what sort of volunteer events and courses are coming up. How do we practise? How are we co-ordinated?”*

## 5. Questionnaires

### 5.1 Employer Questionnaire

#### Introduction

Good Morning/afternoon. I'm calling on behalf of the Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership to talk to you about the .... course one of your staff went on recently.

We're just ringing round to check what people thought of the course. I need to talk to the manager or person who decided to send someone on the course.

**(check: NOT the person who attended the course – unless the two are the same).**

#### **(once through to manager/decision maker)**

I'm really just checking what you thought of the .... course and whether you thought it was useful. Do you have a few minutes to chat with me now or should I call back at a more convenient time?

---

#### Classification Details (Complete at End)

Respondent Name: .....

Company: .....

Number of Employees	Nature of Business (specify) .....	Course Attended
1 - 4	Retail	Welcome on a Plate
5 - 9	Tourism	Introduction to Management
10 - 24	Leisure	Welcome Management
25 - 49	Hospitality	Welcome International
50 - 249		Welcome All
250+		Customer Service in a Retail Environment
		Product Range Planning
		Visual Merchandising

---

Q1. Firstly, how did you hear about the ..... course?

Word of mouth/friend/colleague

Mailing

At a launch event

Via a promotional email

On a website (specify) .....

Read about in a newspaper

Other (specify) .....



Q2. What made you decide to send someone on this course? **(Probe fully)**

Q3. In deciding to send someone on the course, how important was it that the course was free? Was it ...?

- Very important?
- Quite important?
- Not very important?
- Not at all important?

Q4. Do you happen to know which organisation funded the course?

- Yes - DNFTP
- Yes - Learning and Skills Council
- Yes - European Social Fund
- Yes - Other (specify) .....
- No

Q5. Did you also consider similar courses run by other organisations?

- No
- Yes **(Give details and probe why finally chose this course)**

Q6. What sort of **impact** has the course had?  
**(Spontaneous responses)**

**probe on:**

**subject areas** covered?

**relevance** to company?

any **positive** comments?

any **negative** comments?

Q7. Has it made a difference to **the person/people who attended the course**?  
In what ways?

Q8. Has the course made a difference **to the company** as a whole?  
In what ways?

Q9. Overall, would you say the course was ...?

Very worthwhile?  
Quite worthwhile?  
Not very worthwhile?  
Not at all worthwhile?

**(Ask all)** Why do you say that?

Q10. And finally, do you have any future training needs?

Yes – **please give details**  
No

## 5.2 Volunteer Questionnaire

### Introduction

Good Morning/afternoon. I'm calling from an independent research company on behalf of the Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership to talk to you about the 'Team Dorset Volunteer Programme'.

You recently completed some training as part of this programme.

We're just ringing round to check what people thought of the courses. Do you have a few minutes to chat with me now or should I call back at a more convenient time?

---

Respondent Name: .....

Could I just check which course(s) you attended?

Introduction to Trainer Skills  
Emergency First Aid  
Health and Safety  
Welcome International  
Welcome Management  
Welcome All

---

Q1. Firstly, how did you hear about the ..... course?

Word of mouth/friend/colleague  
Mailing  
Via a promotional email  
At a volunteer's coffee morning  
Read about in a newspaper  
Through a volunteer organisation (specify) .....  
On a website (specify) .....  
Other (specify) .....

Q2a. What made you decide to go on this course? **(Probe)**

Q2b. Would you say that one of the main reasons for going on the course was ... (read out)

To get involved in **2012**?  
To brush up on your skills for **other volunteer work**?  
Or to brush up on your skills for **general personal use**?

(write in any more info here)

Q3. In deciding to go on the course, how important was it that the course was free? Was it ...?

Very important?  
Quite important?  
Not very important?  
Not at all important?

Q4. Do you happen to know which organisation funded the course?

Yes - DNFTP  
Yes - Learning and Skills Council  
Yes - European Social Fund  
Yes - Other (specify) .....  
No

Q5. Did you also consider similar courses run by other organisations?

No  
Yes (**Give details and probe why finally chose this course**)

Q6. In general, what was your opinion of the course(s)?  
**(Spontaneous responses)**

**probe on:**

**subject areas?**

**tutor?**

any **positive** comments?

any **negative** comments?

Do you now feel more confident about volunteering in 2012? Why/why not?

Q7. How are you hoping to **use** the skills you've learned on the course(s)?  
Are you aiming to use them ...(read out)

Just for **2012** and events leading up to it?  
For **other volunteer work** not related to 2012?  
Or for **general personal use**?

(write in any more info)

Q8. Overall, would you say the course was ...?

Very worthwhile?  
Quite worthwhile?  
Not very worthwhile?  
Not at all worthwhile?

**(Ask all)** Why do you say that?

Q9. Did you recently attend the event at the Sailing Academy where certificates were given out?

No  
Yes – What did you think of it?

**Probe: Worthwhile? Enjoyable? Useful addition?**

Q10. And finally, do you have any future training needs?

Yes – **please give details**  
No