

# Pathway to success

At a time when the parking sector needs to recruit and retain good employees, director of Alpha Parking **Penny Winder** suggests that a structured professional training approach is the best way forward



or the parking sector to position itself as a force for good, rather than a 'cash cow' or the root of all evil – as some of the popular press would have us believe – then it needs to recruit and retain the best employees.

Which is why the sector needs a career pathway and a structured training programme that is fit for purpose. At Alpha Parking, we have worked with City & Guilds to develop specialist parking training and qualifications in all areas of the sector. We are delighted to have such a solid and long-term partner in our

quest to add an extra level of professionalism to the parking sector.

We are fast approaching a time when we will be providing training for all levels of employment – from new entrants to seasoned professionals.

We have always believed that a structured and clear pathway – which introduces the appropriate skills and knowledge at the appropriate time – is vital in giving individual employees the ability to do their job to the best standard possible, and the employer a high level of confidence in their staff. When they are the first interaction the public has with a company, top-class training is a powerful way to create a positive image.

## TRAINING FOR ALL LEVELS

Alpha Parking has developed a training programme structure that serves each level, from new recruit through to parking manager. At entrant level, we offer training in: public and private enforcement; enforcement in Scotland; public notice processing; private notice processing; and – a new area of responsibility – environmental enforcement.

As long-term training providers to the parking sector, we know the high level of knowledge that civil enforcement and notice-processing officers require to carry out their roles effectively and safely. These courses deal with three main areas: legal knowledge; understanding and application of technology; and soft skills, such as dealing with conflict.

During an initial two- to three-year period within the sector, we would encourage employees – in local authority and private companies – to take the Parking Customer Services qualification. This test is more scenario-based than others – for example, asking staff how they would respond in a given situation – and is designed to encourage the employees to think about how they would react given certain conditions. The focus is on clear decision-making and a positive interaction with the public, even when giving the public news they may not want to hear.

The next two training levels are aimed at those moving up the career ladder into

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management. The Parking Supervisor and Team Leader course gives ambitious and talented employees the chance to learn how to lead a team, develop a good culture within a group, and deal with challenges that need an element of independent thought and decision-making.

It is never easy to make the step from one of the team to the group leader and our training helps make that transition a little easier.

Our Parking Management training is in the latter stages of development, and is the final piece of the development jigsaw. It enables staff to make that step into strategic thinking and high-level decision-making within the parking environment. This course should be launched later this autumn.

## TRAINING ON DEMAND

Running alongside these four levels of training are our stand-alone refresher and focused workshops. These are very much led by our clients, so we will react according to the demand placed upon us. If a client feels their staff could benefit from refresher courses or extra training in the use of traffic orders or parking legislation, for example, then we would

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work with them to provide a suitable course.

At a time when the Positive Parking Agenda is high on the BPA's list of priorities, we feel that offering a very clear parking training structure to all employees, at all levels – delivered to nationally recognised standards – is a very practical step towards changing the public's perception of the enforcement sector. [P](#)

## City & Guilds and parking training

City & Guilds was founded in 1878 and is a widely recognised awarding body in the UK and internationally. A charity operating under a Royal Charter, it covers an extensive range of occupations within industry, commerce and public services.

City & Guilds and the BPA developed the original parking specific qualifications and City & Guilds has continued working with the parking sector, in partnership with Alpha Parking. We offer focused parking training at all levels, in order to raise parking standards and offer a structured and rewarding career path for staff.

The training is used by public and private organisations throughout the UK, and has been extended to meet the growing industry requirements.

