

In Cahoots with the Kingfisher

'Press Release' - Sony Safeguards Kingfisher Nesting Site

Trainees involved in a Business Skills Development Programme at the Sony Corporation had a dramatic change of scenery recently when they left their offices in Weybridge, Surrey, to carry out a major conservation project to safeguard Kingfisher nesting sites at a secluded woodland location near Midhurst in West Sussex.

Twelve members of staff from various divisions within Sony UK Ltd travelled to Dunford House, the YMCA national training centre, to take part in an Outdoor Team Development Programme organised by Response Development Training Limited, the Essex based specialists in outdoor development training.

A central feature of the programme was an ambitious Conservation Project designed by Response Development Training in association with the UK's leading practical conservation and environmental charity the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The Sony team were given just 24 hours to stabilise and renovate a badly eroded culvert, create an improved nesting environment for the Kingfishers, build from scratch a new observation hide using natural materials and then make the whole site ready for next seasons visitors.

The Sony trainees not only overcame appalling weather conditions to complete the project on time, but then went on to make a professional presentation to senior Sony HR managers, backed up with a video record of the team effort and an on the spot word processed report of their achievements and major learning.

When asked what they thought of it all, the trainees response was positive and unanimous -"Thoroughly enjoyable two days" "Excellent learning points to take back to Sony". "Brilliant choice of project" "A great idea, good fun and rewarding"

Andy Carley, director of Response Development Training, praised the dedication and determination of the Sony group and predicted a rapid growth in popularity of this new approach to team based professional training and development.

"Conservation projects, when used as an integral part of professional development training, brings benefits not only to the participants but also the wider community and the environment.

When the Sony team have finished here at Dunford, there will be a real improvement to the countryside and super facilities for ordinary people to use and enjoy for years to come."

After the conservation work has been completed, it is hoped that more people will be encouraged to visit the woodlands around Dunford House for leisure, recreation and nature watching activities over the next few years.

Response Development Training are now busy planning a series of similar projects for other clients at a variety of sites including the Royal Parks in West London and National Nature Reserves in Kent.

Background

This event was run as part of the first Sony Business Skills Programme. The programme was for new graduate recruits and young 'graduate calibre' employees already in the company and spans a period of 22 months.

The Outdoor Team Development Element was placed at the very start of the overall programme with its key objectives as follows:

- ✦ To help the whole group of participants get to know each other, and to build a supportive and cohesive team environment for the Business Skills Programme.
- ✦ To prepare delegates to work in their investigation teams by raising their awareness of team dynamics including an understanding of their own and others' style of contribution in a team environment.
- ✦ To expose delegates to team challenges, which will help them, learn the key skills of teamwork of this nature: eg planning, communicating, time management, problem solving, resource management, working effectively under pressure etc.
- ✦ To provide a fun, memorable event that will act as an energising start to the programme, and a reference point for future networking within the delegate group.

The programme was a huge success and acted as a perfect launch pad for the new Business Skills Programme, which started immediately afterwards.



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