

## **TAP® Trainers on Payroll**

04 February 2005

**Sarah Walker, Head of Training Services for Northgate HR, has been explaining why ongoing investment in the development of trainer skills through the Trainer Assessment Programme (TAP) is a key element in their business strategy.**



Sarah Walker advising a delegate

Between 2002 and 2004 Northgate Information Solutions made a series of four acquisitions in the HR and Payroll software market that resulted in its HRS division - Northgate HR - becoming one of the leading suppliers of HR & Payroll software and services in the UK. These acquisitions also extended Northgate HR's outsourcing services and strengthened the company's position within overseas markets. Northgate HR Training Services was formed as a result of these acquisitions and is focused on providing high-quality training to Northgate HR's customer base.

In May 2004 Sarah Walker (pictured above) was appointed as Head of Training Services for Northgate HR. She takes up the story: "I wanted to pull the team together and ensure that we were using best practice in all areas of the team. We needed to align our daily and functional procedures and ensure that all our customers were getting a consistently high standard of service. I decided the best way forward was to work towards Gold Standard Training Provider Accreditation by the Institute of IT Training for the whole of Northgate HR Training Services."

Walker believes that IITT quality assurance is extremely important for both the training team and their customers. "The accreditation gives the team a goal to work towards, it increases pride in their work and improves the perception people have of Training as a professional service."

IITT Gold Standard Training Provider Accreditation can be achieved by training providers that have already been accredited by the Institute of IT Training for a minimum of six months. It guarantees that all trainers used to provide external training services are in possession of a valid Certificate of Training Skills. This

guarantee includes any associate trainers used as well as employed trainers.

Sarah Walker has been committed to the Trainer Assessment Programme (TAP®) ever since she first achieved her own TAP® Certificate in Training Delivery Skills back in September 1998. She found the experience extremely helpful: "For me the course gave the foundations, knowledge and skills needed to build my training delivery skills, increase my confidence and learn the methodology behind training."

"I remember delivering my 15 minute session on the first day of the course and watching it back, then presenting my last training session on day 5. What a difference! I had learnt so much about questioning, tone and speed of voice, checking delegate learning and writing training scripts. The course was extremely beneficial to me and my continued development within the training arena."

More recently, five trainers from Northgate HR Training Services have attended courses leading to the TAP® Certificate in Training Delivery Skills or the TAP® Certificate in Training Design & Development Skills. In the longer term, Sarah Walker is planning to have every trainer achieve a TAP qualification and for the Training Services team to be awarded IITT Gold Standard Training Provider accreditation.

Walker feels that ongoing investment in the development of training skills is a key element in Northgate HR's business strategy: "We want to continually improve the way training is marketed and then delivered within the business. By investing in courses within The Trainer Assessment Programme we are able to ensure that the skills of each individual in the team are appropriately developed and can then be continually assessed against objective measures. Each of our trainers holding the TAP® Certificate in Training Delivery Skills undergoes formal Re-Assessment by Assessors from The Training Foundation every three years, thereby providing periodic external benchmarking for our annual team reviews."

"Our customers are always reassured by TAP® certification. It means they can be confident that their delegates will receive a consistently high standard of learning facilitation, leading to effective transfer of knowledge & skills and therefore enhanced performance back in the workplace."