



Swindon Employees in the Community Network (SEitCN)

March 09 Update

Understanding Data Protection *a Skills Bank success story*

The legal department at ARVAL, one of SEitCN's employer members, recently provided a volunteer to help Threshold, a Swindon charity working with homeless people.

Threshold wanted advice and support to understand data protection legislation. ARVAL volunteer, Joanne, reviewed the charity's data protection procedures and gave assistance in drafting a new policy. A survey was carried out of how the charity stored personal data and advice was provided. Joanne also ran a training day attended by all 7 of Threshold's senior staff. As a result, the charity has new compliant policies and processes and is reviewing all its data files in line with Joanne's recommendations.

"Working with Threshold for just one afternoon certainly opened my eyes to the wider issues associated with homelessness and the obstacles to be overcome in order to enjoy the basic things in life that we all, sometimes, take for granted."

The Team at Threshold were extremely grateful for my time and having left them armed with a number of useful tools, there was no doubt in my mind that this voluntary session was completely worthwhile."

But the benefit Threshold got from finding a volunteer from ARVAL through the Skills Bank did not end there. Following the expert advice, ARVAL staff also raised money for Threshold through a bucket collection on a "dress down Friday". Also, the company donated surplus leather sofas from their customer services department for the conservatory at Threshold's substance misuse project. These have greatly improved the accommodation's ambience and provide a comfortable area where residents can relax.

Skills Bank projects are tasks requiring up to 20 hours of skilled volunteer time to help a local charity with a business issue. They are an excellent development tool for staff, providing opportunity to develop "soft skills" and practice business skills whilst helping the local community. Contact Volunteer Centre Swindon to see the full list of projects currently listed in the Skills Bank or, if you are a voluntary group, to discuss any business skills support you need.

SEitCN Priorities for 2009

Priorities for SEitCN in 2009 are:

Improved Branding and Marketing of Network

As SEitCN approaches the 5th anniversary of its launch, we intend to raise the profile of the Network to attract more employers to join us. Recent feedback has said that our name needs shortening, so brand development and marketing managers from Intel and Zurich have volunteered to develop a new brand and name for the Network. We're expecting this Skills Bank project to be completed by early summer, so look out for the launch of our new identity.

Increase Number of Active Corporate Members

We're intending to work more closely with existing employer members to increase volunteering activity. We have a target of 20 active members by year end. Last year, 13 employer members undertook some form of volunteering through SEitCN.

Secure Sufficient Finance for Network

Since its initial launch, SEitCN has not charged for membership, preferring instead to encourage employers and voluntary organisations just to come together to grow volunteering. Apart from securing grants wherever possible, SEitCN has relied on generous donations from a few corporate members and the income from fees for brokering challenges. We hope to maintain this approach and have been asking corporate members to make whatever donation they can in 2009.

SEitCN May Network Day

We hope to see you all at De Vere for the next Network Day in May. Date and agenda will follow in April. As usual there will be plenty of opportunities for employer members and voluntary organisations to meet each other and explore the potential of volunteering.