

LOWELL GROUP HONOURS GRADUATES

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Leeds-based debt purchasing specialist, Lowell Group, has honoured the latest crop of graduates to come out of the Lowell Academy, its in-house training school.

A special ceremony held at the end of October saw 21 staff members don mortar boards and gowns to be presented with their graduation certificates.

All new employees pass through the Academy, with collections negotiators spending an initial eight weeks learning about the company, its processes, procedures and systems as well as negotiation skills, customer service skills, and compliance with legislation.

Head of Human Resources Annette Martinelli said: "Training is a fundamental component within Lowell. Our recruitment policy focuses on recruiting people with the right attitude; it's not a prerequisite that they have previous collections experience. Therefore, it is essential that we have a strong training programme in place to develop the right level of skills and ensure we achieve optimum performance.

"The graduation ceremony is a bit of fun but it also conveys important messages. It tells people they are valued by the company and considered to be worth the investment of time and money. It also indicates that the job they are being trained for requires skill and not just anyone can do it, thereby giving them a real sense of achievement."

Chief Operations Officer Andrew Bartle added: "Graduation from the Academy is just the start. From then on staff are put through an ongoing programme of performance developing workshops. Our commitment to training is one of the cornerstones of our success and one of the main reasons why our staff retention and collections performance rates are way above the industry average."

Formed in 2004, Lowell Group achieved a turnover of £50.8m this year. It has almost doubled its size year on year and currently employs around 300 people at its state-of-the art HQ and customer contact centre in Leeds.

The Group's operations division Lowell Financial is currently servicing more than two million consumer accounts with an asset value in excess of £2.3 billion.