Case study

Kellogg’s
Kellogg’s European shared service centre has an ethos of employing and training quality individuals to help it move to a business partnering role. Global food retailer Kellogg’s has won the prestigious ‘Shared Services Employer of the Year’ and ‘The Best Overall Shared Service Organisation’ awards for its European centre based in Manchester, UK. The prize was awarded by Shared Services Outsourcing News magazine at a conference in Barcelona in May.

Kellogg’s is a CIMA Training Quality Partner and CIMA Development Partner and exclusively supports CIMA training for its graduate intake - with an impressive pass rate of 93%. It has 19 CIMA members and 38 students working in the UK - 80% of those students are in the Manchester SSC.

John Gregory
John Gregory is European Financial Services Director for Kellogg’s at the company’s Manchester shared service centre (SSC), opposite the Old Trafford cricket ground and a stone’s throw from the Manchester United football stadium.

Gregory said that the main reason for entering the awards was to put the Kellogg’s SSC on the map for potential employees. He said: ‘We know that we have a great talent pool in Manchester and across the UK but the resource is scarce and we compete with a number of other well known shared service organisations (SSOs) in the area.’

Rick Sturge, Director of Employer and Strategic Development at CIMA, congratulated the Kellogg’s team on their achievements at the awards. He said: ‘Our relationship with Kellogg’s has developed into a very healthy, collaborative one over the years and is a great example of how our employer and strategic development approach works in shared service organisations.

We are also pleased with Kellogg’s incredible pass rates and its growing CIMA community. We look forward to building on this relationship.’

John agreed that there doesn’t seem to be much let up in the job market for qualified accountants, despite the economic slow down.

‘We are a growing company,’ he said. ‘With this comes added complexity as we expand further into Eastern Europe. To support this business growth I don’t just need good technical accountants who can understand the business broadly, but also those who exhibit the potential to develop into future leaders. This is key to our success.’

This leads to a fundamental point. To Gregory the trend is moving away from the traditional ‘transaction processing factory’. ‘We are now moving up the value chain to better support and deliver value to our business customers,’ he said.

This is where CIMA, with its emphasis on broader business...
skills, comes in. Though Gregory is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales he said he has always thought of CIMA as being on a par with that qualification. But also, now that he finds himself in competition with other companies for university graduates looking to move into industry, he has to offer what the graduates think is the best course – ‘I firmly believe that is CIMA,’ he said.

‘The advantage that CIMA gives me over ACA in this respect is that you bring new recruits through the business, they get to see how it all works and understand it all the way through. If you bring in an ACA, they come from a different, practice engendered culture which can be difficult to change. The advantage of taking graduates straight from university is that they settle into, and feel comfortable with, the company culture from day one. This is extremely important to me – the Kellogg’s culture embodies why we believe that we are such a great company.’

What role is there in the SSC for CIMA’s Certificate in Business Accounting? ‘We tend to recruit graduates straight onto the CIMA qualification,’ said Gregory. ‘But if we have existing employees who’ve come in through a different route for whatever reason, we do encourage them to do the certificate level. If they do well, then we offer to fund them to do the whole thing.’

So where does the SSC go from here? Gregory said: ‘Other competing companies offer a really robust graduate recruitment and training programme. We have a great training programme and are now investing to overlay it with a graduate programme. This is crucial if we want to compete for the best talent.’