

## A glittering career

### Jolanta Zalanskaite Bulgari

#### *Retail Skill Advanced Apprenticeship, level 3*

Jolanta works for Bulgari, the internationally renowned luxury brand. She has recently won an award for special recognition for her outstanding commitment on the Retail Academy Apprenticeship scheme.

She started her career in the UK four years ago and despite English not being her first language, she has progressed through the Retail Academy having completed her Customer Service level 2 and has developed her career through several roles within the Nuance Group.

She is very passionate about her work and is totally committed to the Bulgari brand. She enjoys encouraging and setting an example to other members of the team, motivating them to take part in the programmes that the Retail Academy offers.

**Jonathan Gelleburn**, The Airport Manager for the Nuance Group says: *“Completing the qualifications has completely changed Jolanta’s confidence and skills. She gets a real buzz from assisting customers and selling.”*

Jolanta was thrilled to hear her name being read out as a nominee at the Heathrow graduation awards ceremony and was delighted and almost speechless when announced as the winner.

**SPECIAL AWARD**  
Apprenticeship  
Learner Special Recognition  
**Outstanding Commitment**



*Jolanta receiving her award from John Holland-Kaye, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport Ltd.*

**Jonathan Gelleburn** continues: *“It is a pleasure to have someone like Jolanta on our team. She is always smiling and happy to help both customers and her colleagues. She always wanted to develop herself and learn new skills and this is why we are so happy for her to progress in the company.”*

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## A taste for learning

**Bivar Lacmane**  
**Costa**

*Customer Service Vocational Qualification, level 2*

Bivar started his career with Costa two years ago and after finishing his Barista training, he was encouraged to undertake a Customer Service Vocational Qualification with the Retail Academy. Now he has won an award recognising his outstanding commitment to the programme.

He initially was apprehensive about undertaking a qualification, but once the programme was under way, his enthusiasm took over and he found that he really enjoyed learning and even asked for extra homework to take on.

Bivar says that *"The course has really helped me develop and it has improved the way I perform and interact with passengers. It has helped me deal with all kinds of situations in a better way."*

The programme has helped Bivar progress his career and through his hard work and training has achieved a promotion to Assistant Manager.

His manager says *"Bivar is a shining example on how to do things right"*.

Now Bivar plans to develop his skills even further by completing the Level 3 qualification and has become a keen advocate for the Retail Academy and actively encourages his team to take part in the Retail Academy's programmes.

**SPECIAL AWARD**  
Vocational Qualification  
Learner Special Recognition  
**Outstanding Commitment**



*Bivar receiving his award from John Holland-Kaye, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport Ltd.*

**Matt Berridge**, Retail Development Manager, Costa, London Airports said: *"The Retail Academy really helps us and the team members. I have found that the support and training from the Retail Academy team has really benefited my staff by increasing their knowledge more generally around customer service, business management and in some cases personal development. Bivar is a great example of this."*

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## On the Fast track

Sharon Desbottes

BAA Security

*Customer Service Apprenticeship, level 2*

Sharon works for the security team at Terminal 5 and was speechless to discover that she had won a Retail Academy award for special recognition as a learner of outstanding quality on her Apprenticeship programme.

Sharon had been nominated for the quality and standard of her portfolio, in particular the case studies she created. Her extra effort and hard work led to her completing the course before the initial deadline.

Sharon has had a varied career to date, starting out in contract sales for a wallpaper company. While bringing up her family, Sharon worked as a child-minder and swimming teacher, gaining an Vocational Qualification in early years childcare along the way.

After seeing an advertisement in the local paper for security positions at Heathrow, Sharon applied and was offered a post at Terminal 1. After her training, she moved over to join the team at Terminal 5.

Sharon discovered the Retail Academy in an unusual way. After observing someone watching the security area, from behind a screen, Sharon naturally challenged them and discovered a Retail Academy Assessor observing one their learners from the security team! Sharon was interested to learn more and when she heard about the courses on offer, signed up for the programme.

### SPECIAL AWARD

Vocational Qualification  
Learner Special Recognition  
**Outstanding Quality**



*Sharon receiving her award from John Holland-Kaye, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport Ltd.*

Since then, she hasn't looked back and thoroughly enjoyed completing the qualification, giving it a characteristic 110% effort. She enjoyed the chance to learn at work and says *"I'm really appreciative of this opportunity and I have recommended the Retail Academy to a number of my colleagues."*

**Her mentor** on the course says that: *"Sharon is very customer focussed and this comes across in the way she applies herself to her studies. Her work is always well written and explained and she is a huge advocate of the Retail Academy."*

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## Mentoring success

Chris Thomas

Sony

Mentor

Chris, a manager at Sony, has always been a strong supporter of the Retail Academy. He recently won the prestigious award of Most Supportive Mentor.

He is responsible for staff development and combines the Retail Academy programmes with Sony's in-house programme to develop his staff into future managers of the business.

Chris enjoys being proactive and has identified many new ideas on improving training amongst his staff and works with the Retail Academy's Vocational Assessor to come up with new and innovative improvements.

He says: *"I have been encouraged by the support that Stephanie, our Vocational Assessor, gives to me and the team. We have successfully mentored two staff members this year and I have seen their confidence grow - they have become stronger supervisors and sales people. I am sure we will have more graduates from this store"*.

Chris particularly enjoyed the Awards Evening, commenting: *"It was a wonderful way to congratulate everyone involved. To have John Bird speak to us about his experiences and explain how he felt the programme added value and a belief structure was inspiring"*.

### SPECIAL AWARD

Mentor Special Recognition  
Most Supportive



Chris receiving his award from John Holland-Kaye, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport Ltd.

Asked how he felt about winning, Chris said: *"The recognition of being nominated meant a lot to me, and to have the store nominated for Business of the Year was just the 'icing on the cake'"*.

Chris has found that the programmes have made a big difference to the Sony business. *"The courses can easily be tailored to our business needs. I have been able to see our graduates develop as individuals; One has taken the leap into management by becoming a team supervisor, he is also looking forward to starting his Team Leading qualification in the new year"*.

Chris is keen to support and encourage future graduates and plans to further his own progression through taking qualifications in management and then move onto a Foundation Degree in the future.

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## Employer of the Year

### L.K.Bennett

**L.K.Bennett, the glamorous footwear and fashion retailer, have been awarded the Employer of the Year 2009 award by the Retail Academy for outstanding support of their employee's training.**

The company were particularly praised for their activity within the local community, where they have offered and supported placements to people who have fallen out of the traditional education or training cycle.

L.K.Bennett are always keen to support their employees studying for Vocational Qualifications and Apprenticeships. One of their managers has recently been nominated to join the Retail Academy's Foundation Degree.

A spokesperson for the company said: *"Our employees are very important to us which is why providing good training contributes to our business success as well as enabling individuals to gain confidence, experience and move up in their career path."*

L.K.Bennett find the training that the Retail Academy offers particularly relevant to their staff's skills development by providing skills that can be directly applied at work.

*"Training is a great motivation and our employees are more dedicated to their jobs and stay with the company longer because they have the chance to develop their skills and progress"*.

The Apprenticeship and Vocational Qualification programmes fit into the company's existing training programmes and the short time away that learners spend with an Assessor noticeably helps improve the levels of customer service.

## SPECIAL AWARD

### Employer Employer of the Year 2009



*The team receiving their award from John Holland-Kaye, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport Ltd.*

In order to provide the high level of customer service that differentiates L.K.Bennett, it is essential that all staff are confident, passionate, knowledgeable and deliver their best.

Several employees have taken part at different levels, but an outstanding example is May, who started with the company as a sales assistant and has worked her way through the Vocational Qualification levels, being promoted to Assistant Manager within the company. May recently won L.K.Bennett an Employee of the Year award as a result of her dedication and impressive career progression.

Finally, L.K.Bennett say that: *"Working with the Retail Academy creates a better working environment, offers more opportunities, helps keep our employees motivated and happy and develops people skills beyond expectations"*. The company highly recommends the courses that the Retail Academy provides in order to "Make every journey better" at Heathrow.

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# Retail Academy

Retail Academy | CASE STUDY | OCTOBER 2009

## Training for a unique environment

### Nalin de Silva - Dixons

#### *Retail Skills Vocational Qualification, level 2*

Nalin, originally from Sri Lanka, started working for Dixons back in 2000. He really enjoys the customer facing element of his work and is ambitious to progress with his career.

*"I heard about the Retail Academy through our company's intranet and I decided to do the Vocational Qualification to develop my retail skills".*

The training has given Nalin a deeper understanding of retail legislation and has helped him develop his retail knowledge and gain in confidence. He loves working at the Terminal 5 store as he finds the variety of customers and challenges really interesting, commenting: *"You have to approach people differently than in a typical high street environment."*

Nalin has encouraged many of his colleagues to take on further training with the Retail Academy to develop their skills. *"The programme is a fantastic opportunity for anyone. Firstly, it's free and all done during your work time, so you don't have to spend extra time going to an external college. Studying has not taken away from my time at work; it has just enhanced what I'm doing already. My Vocational Assessor has been really supportive and so have Dixons."*



Nalin outside Dixons in Terminal 5

Working at the airport has its own special set of challenges and opportunities. Often the working day starts early and the passenger profile varies widely on a daily basis. Nalin enjoys being front of house on the shop floor and continually learning about different customer requirements and cultures.

His Vocational Assessor says: *"Nalin understood what was expected of him from the start and has excelled in his knowledge and understanding of the retail business. His confidence has peaked and he has also improved his English language skills".*

Nalin's next steps are to undertake the Dixons' leadership programme, which will help prepare him for a future management role.

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## Securing a successful future

### Dacre Almeida, BAA Security Team Leading Apprenticeship, level 2



Dacre Almeida at work in the security office

Dacre Almeida, known to his colleagues as “Dacs” has worked with BAA for 5 years at London Heathrow. He started his career as a Resource Allocator and then became a Service Team Leader. Previously Dacs worked at Customs and Excise in India, before coming to the UK, following in his father’s footsteps.

BAA Human Resources team suggested that Dacs might benefit from the Retail Academy training, so he met his Vocation Assessor and he is now not only a learner participating in the programmes but also a mentor for five security officers in his team.

As a Service Team Leader, Dacs’s role is extremely varied, dealing with anything from fire evacuations, violent or difficult passengers, overseeing the central search area procedure and monitoring security officers’ performance.

Dacs says *“The Vocational Qualification has given me the opportunity to research further into subjects, so that I have more ideas on improving work situations and operational issues. It has really broadened my thinking and helped me lead my team with new skills and ideas.”*

Although Dacs has had to deal with several operational changes in his work, environment and changes to the Terminal structure, his training has helped him to cope well. He enjoys mentoring his security officers and has seen big improvements in customer service within his team. *“They can always come to me for help, or if they need some guidance.”*

His Vocational Assessor says: *“Dacs really encourages his team to succeed and always makes time available to support them. He has written witness statements to highlight and confirm their job roles and take his role as a mentor very seriously and responsibility.”*

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## Positive prospects

**Michael Bowley**  
**BAA Security**

*Team Leading Apprenticeship,  
level 2*

Michael is a great example of how building up confidence and training can make a big difference to personal development. At the age of 13, he was struggling with school, but with support, he worked hard and went on to complete his GCSE's and O Levels and every day added a new word to his vocabulary. Not only has Michael now completed his Team Leading Apprenticeship he is also the Health & Safety & union representative for terminal three.

*"The Team Leader Qualification has really built my confidence and made me realise just how much I have taught myself over the years"* says Michael.

Having worked across Europe, before joining BAA two years ago, Michael had not had the opportunity for formal management training, so he jumped at the chance to take part in the Vocational Qualification programme at Heathrow.

As a Service Team Leader, Michael looks after as many as 200 security officers on shift and he is a mentor to 6 learners.

*"I have seen a huge difference in the officer's pride and confidence, since they have undertaken Customer Services Apprenticeships. They really believe in themselves and handle their jobs much more effectively".*



Michael Bowley - BAA Security

Michael believes that training helps people realise how much they know already and gives them tools to apply this knowledge to new situations. It also helps them identify things that they might not have done previously and look to expand their knowledge in these areas. He says: *"Technically, officers receive a wealth of training, but this programme helps them develop customer service skills, which makes them stronger officers"*.

Jo, Michael's Vocational Assessor says: *"Michael has seen an improvement in drive, morale and motivation in his staff after training and he hopes to continue his learning and development by studying towards management level 3. He's a great example of how training can improve confidence and self belief."*

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## Trading places

### Cara Hall, Hamleys

#### *Retail Skills Advanced Apprenticeship, level 3*

Cara Hall works as Store Manager for Hamleys Terminals 1 and 2. Hamleys is one of the most famous toy stores in the world and attracts a wide range of international customers.

Cara is currently studying for her Advanced Apprenticeship in Retail, having made a very successful transition from a senior role in hairdressing. Now she is developing strong business skills, such as handling budgets and sales figures, managing fast moving stock across both stores and heading up a team of staff.

She says: *"I have advanced my retail career much faster than I expected, the Apprenticeship has really helped me develop key skills, such as dealing with figures".*

Cara has also supported members of her staff in completing an Apprenticeship programme and says she has noticed a huge improvement in skills and confidence of those taking part. *"Working in retail is a career, not just a job. There are so many elements that you are responsible for and the work is always diverse and challenging."*



Cara Hall at work in Heathrow

Although Cara enjoyed the customer interaction she had with her previous role, working at the airport enables her to interact with a wide range of people from different countries and cultures and she feels part of a community with the other retailers. *"It's fun, but you have to be thick skinned at times, dealing with staff and customers, every day has its challenges as well as rewards"*

She is looking forward to progressing her career and continues to support her colleagues, leading by example. She feels that the Apprenticeships helped her take a new approach to dealing with a wide range of situations and hopes to progress to a head office or area manager role in the future.

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