



GROUP MEMBERSHIP



## Royal Bank of Scotland partners with BCS through the Group Membership Scheme and reaps the benefits for its IT development department

In November 2005 the Royal Bank of Scotland Group's (RBS) Group Technology, IT development division (ITD) became one of the first organisations to join the British Computer Society's (BCS) new Group Membership Scheme.

The scheme aims to promote professionalism in IT by helping companies develop best practice in the IT workforce. Employees of Group Membership Schemes can take full advantage of BCS membership benefits including access to industry standard professional development through the SFIPlus, Information Systems Exam Board (ISEB), and professional qualification products. The scheme also enables fast track membership for entire IT departments at professional level and provides opportunities for networking at Branch and Forum meetings or Specialist Group involvement.

Colin Baxter, Learning and Development Manager of RBS explains; *"We opted for Group Membership to encourage staff in our IT teams to achieve Chartered IT Professional status (CITP) where applicable. It also offered us a way to raise our profile within the IT industry as a whole and enhance our IT department's performance in delivering projects."*

Through the scheme RBS have been able to create a structured path to Chartered status for its IT professionals with individuals encouraged to create clear career development via BCS' online access to SFIPlus and appropriate training and development.

Colin Baxter explains: *"We see this as complementing our existing company ethos of encouraging staff to develop, raise standards and adopt best practice and at the same time it enables the IT department to enhance the level of service they offer their clients, both internal and external. We hope it will also emphasise our commitment to staff development and help us improve staff retention."*



RBS implemented the scheme through a two-step process. They ran a year's pilot scheme to assess the impact and benefits to the department. Membership was paid by RBS for staff members provided the individuals tied the benefits to their own personal development plans thus ensuring that their staff were able to take full advantage of the industry standards open to them through SFIaplus.

Throughout the process the BCS supported the RBS implementation with regular consultations, presentations to staff, a supply of up to date promotional information including leaflets and posters along with membership packs.

At the end of the pilot year, RBS undertook a staff survey to find out whether the scheme had proved successful and had met their needs. The results showed the scheme was very popular with the staff and had benefited RBS as an organisation.

Some of the key benefits as identified by staff included:

- **33% of staff found involvement in Specialist Groups as a key benefit of membership**
- **25% found support for ISEB accreditation was a key benefit**
- **23% found access to BCS information such as libraries and website a key benefit**

Another positive aspect commented upon by many of the respondents to the survey was the feeling of unity created within the workforce through the common membership, as well as the opportunity to share experiences and insights with people in similar organisations and situations.

In addition, the Group Membership Scheme was perceived by staff and management to have raised standards and promoted best practice, therefore raising the reputation of the department within the IT industry as a whole.

As a result of the feedback and the success of the first year, RBS renewed their Group Membership Scheme and decided to continue to pay for staff on an ongoing basis. The scheme's second year has seen an influx of new members bringing the total to over 200 individual members out of a total IT work force of 2,000, attracting membership from across the department including software programming and analyst staff.

Colin Baxter says "The scheme has exceeded our expectations and we are now considering upgrading our membership to allow us to promote and verify Chartered Membership applications as the number of staff who achieve Chartered IT Professional (CITP) status continues to grow."

#### Supporting quotes taken from the staff survey:

*"Professionalism in practice is underpinned by BCS membership as participation encourages and supports a professional attitude within the workplace. Gaining and sharing information with team members helps local team working and leadership. Not all information is relevant for the BCS member but project managers and leaders are finding information useful for sharing across their own areas of specialism and delivery. Membership also strengthens RBS's standing in the IT industry by providing a more professional, qualified, aware workforce."*

*"BCS through the code of conduct and its general attitude encourages professionalism and an objective attitude. It also makes you aware of your own value to the company and empowers you to use your experience to make a more valuable contribution."*



[www.bcs.org/groupmembership](http://www.bcs.org/groupmembership)



#### THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

FIRST FLOOR, BLOCK D, NORTH STAR HOUSE, NORTH STAR AVENUE, SWINDON SN2 1FA

TEL +44 (0)1793 417417 FAX +44 (0)1793 478088

Email: [products@hq.bcs.org.uk](mailto:products@hq.bcs.org.uk) Website: [www.bcs.org/groupmembership](http://www.bcs.org/groupmembership)

BCS IS A REGISTERED CHARITY: NUMBER 292786