

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Conference to get ‘fresh perspectives on leadership’

DELEGATES attending the Garden Centre Association’s (GCA) golden jubilee conference in January (2016) will be treated to some insider tips on how to hone their leadership skills.

The GCA has booked human resources specialist Lucy Adams to speak at its 50th anniversary annual event, which this year takes place in Brighton from January 24 until 27, 2016.

Iain Wylie, Chief Executive of the GCA, said: “Lucy was the BBC’s HR Director during one of its most turbulent periods. Responsible for all aspects of employee relations, reward, training and development, she reduced the BBC management team by over 30%, saving the organisation £25m a year.

“In her five year tenure Lucy saw four DGs come and go, oversaw the move to the Salford site and coped with numerous, very public crises including executive pay-offs and the Savile scandal.

“This alongside the everyday work of talent retention, development and remuneration, HR policy, and the challenges of a publicly-funded organisation, working in a highly commercial, fast-moving sector with over 20,000 employees. And of course at the moment the BBC is currently in the headlines again with regards its review and future funding so this is all very topical.”

Prior to working at the BBC, Lucy was Group HR Director at Serco, the government services business covering everything from transport to nuclear facilities to schools.

Lucy, who now runs a communications agency called Firehouse, was in position during a period of extensive expansion and acquisition for the business. Before this she worked for the law firm Eversheds.

Lucy explained: “During my speech I will discuss how to deliver real change within an organisation, and why it isn’t always popular: balancing the need for quick decisions with possible moral backlashes and issues relating to employee engagement.

“In an uncertain world, many accepted ideas of leadership aren’t up to the job and by looking at everything from management theory to neuroscience, I consider fresh perspectives on leadership, employee engagement and management organisation. I also address how businesses can deal with public scrutiny and adverse publicity, and the nature of leadership and change in organisations.”

More than 300 delegates are expected to attend the GCA's annual conference, which will be held at The Grand Hotel in Brighton from January 24 until 27, 2016.

Iain continued: "As always our conference will provide attendees with pertinent information on key aspects of the garden centre industry to assist members in achieving their business goals.

"The information shared will focus on a wide range of topics, including merchandising, marketing and management. There will also be plenty of opportunities for delegates to network and socialise.

"Next year is an extra special one for us. 2016 will see the association celebrate its 50th anniversary so the annual dinner in particular will be a very special event.

"As well as the celebrations the conference will be the usual mix of top quality speakers, analysis of inspections and garden centre best practice, and the unveiling of competition and award winners. We will be announcing more details shortly on how to book places for the event via our website www.gca.org.uk.

"The schedule for the golden jubilee conference will be as follows:

- Sunday – Greenfingers Challenge Cup
- Monday – inspection and competition round ups plus keynote speakers – based around operational issues. An evening dinner themed, networking event for garden centres and associate members.
- Tuesday – a day of strategy with keynote speakers on subjects such as the economy, challenges facing business and direction of future market trends with an emphasis on maintaining and enhancing profitability. In the afternoon there will be the supplier exhibition. In the evening we will host our Annual Gala Dinner and awards presentation, plus a special celebration of our 50th anniversary."

The GCA represents nearly 200 garden centres nationwide.

Through sharing information and its inspection programme the GCA helps members to achieve high standards in customer service, plant quality and reliability.

To book a place at the conference, please visit the members' area on the GCA website via www.gca.org.uk.

For further information, please call 0118 930 8918. Alternatively, log on to www.facebook.com/GardenCentreAssociation or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.

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For further media details, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email Rachel@porcupinepr.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive on 07843 633408 or email Iain@gca.org.uk.

Photograph caption: Lucy Adams, who will be one of the speakers at the next GCA Conference in January (2016).

