

# THE FUTURE WORKS

**TRAINING** • THE QUALITY OF DG ONLINE TRAINING'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH HAS BEEN RECOGNISED BY INDUSTRY AS OFFERING VALUE FOR MONEY AND EXCELLENT RESULTS

"WE WERE COMPLETELY humbled – and very proud," says Lisa Horner, one of the three training professionals behind Dangerous Goods Online Training, of the company's recognition as being 'Highly Commended' during the *Air Cargo News* Innovation Awards this past September. Not only was this a terrific boost for a small and young company – formed only in late 2019 – but it also marked the first time that the Awards had recognised an organisation working in the dangerous goods sector.

"It was something just to get short-listed," agrees Paul Horner, who was formerly with the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) dangerous goods team and is an experienced trainer. "All of us are very proud."

Scott Dimmock, the third partner in DG Online Training, says he was "humbled to be such a small company competing against giants of the air transport industry", especially as it was the first training provider to be recognised by the Awards.

DG Online Training's customers were not

surprised by the award, with Dan Lee saying: "Having experienced your training this year, this award comes as no surprise to me. Well done Team DG Online Training!" Commenting on his training, Lee added: "Welcome to the future of DG by Air learning! Well done to the DG Online Training team for producing a simple and effective method of delivery and learning that sees instant access to the programme performed at your own pace with the full range of back-up and supporting resources to assist your learning and confirming your application of the key learning points of IATA DG by Air.

I fully recommended any DG professional to use this route to re-qualify or to get back into the land of IATA DG. For those who are new to the world of Dangerous Goods shipments you should make full use of the instructor on-line assistant facility and the accompanying course manual."

## TIME AND PLACE

Testimonials such as that illustrate the effort that has been put in by the three people behind DG Online Training. The past two years have been "a rollercoaster ride," Paul says. "It has been enjoyable – but challenging". The biggest challenge was the move to lockdown in early 2020 but that was the biggest opportunity too. DG Online Training's remote training systems were developed well before the Covid-19 pandemic struck but they were in the right place to be able to provide continuity in critical training programmes at the point where face-to-face training suddenly became virtually impossible.

Furthermore, the pandemic highlighted the importance of the air cargo chain, not least in getting vaccines delivered around the world but also in relation to growing e-commerce business. Those shipments generated by e-commerce – often consumer goods – can have a large dangerous goods content (not least lithium batteries) and this means



PAUL HORNER, LISA HORNER AND SCOTT DIMMOCK HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN JUST TWO YEARS, TO THE POINT WHERE THEIR INNOVATIONS ARE BECOMING THE BENCHMARK FOR QUALITY IN ONLINE TRAINING



airlines are putting more pressure on shippers to get their compliance right. And that means more requirements for training.

While DG Online Training already had its air training programme in place, the lack of in-person contact meant that invigilating examinations would also have to move online – and this was a major change. Paul explains that they worked very quickly, contacting the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and putting in place systems and controls, including secure packagings to get examination papers to and from candidates, to ensure that examinations were reliable. Having got CAA to agree to the way of working, other providers have followed the example but, Paul says, the way that DG Online Training is doing it has become the benchmark.

While a lot of training activity in the early months of the pandemic involved refresher courses, there were also a surprisingly high number of people coming forward for initial training, Paul says. Many of these were individuals who had been made redundant and were looking to ‘skill up’ to be ready for the post-pandemic job market and there were a lot looking for dangerous goods acceptance (Category 6) training.

#### SPEED UP ADOPTION

Scott explains that, as DG Online Training became established, its early courses were continuously improved using feedback from trainees, along with the areas where Lisa could see that those trainees were having difficulty. That process is ongoing, while the arrival of remote invigilation was a major step up. The Covid pandemic accelerated adoption of the concept and, he adds, remote invigilation was a sea change in the business – but is now part of the norm and has opened up opportunities around the world. The main

competition DG Online Training faced was resistance to change but that, he says, is now fading.

Online training is steadily being more widely adopted, and not just because with Covid restrictions in place it is the only option. Word of mouth is spreading awareness and the recent recognition and award has already generated more inquiries. The next stage in the company’s development will have to be coping with more volume – though that will not be difficult to manage.

DG Online Training is, indeed, now becoming the trainer of choice for some airlines – including a few big names – as well as government agencies, forwarders and ground handlers. And those companies are passing the word on to their clients too.

#### CHEAPER AND BETTER

Another benefit of online training and examination is, of course, its price. The training provider does not need to send its tutors out into the world, with the associated costs of travel, lodging and subsistence, and neither do those being trained. That makes the whole process cheaper than in-person training but, as Paul says, being cheaper doesn’t mean the training is not as good. “It’s affordable and high quality,” he says, and DG Online Training will also rent copies of the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations to trainees while they are doing the course.

“Online training used to have a stigma attached,” Scott says, “but we are finding that once a new customer tries it, they come back for more.” It is also good for the training provider, as its trainers have the time to do more value-added material, improving the courses over time, and it has the advantage that trainees can do the coursework and sit the examination at a time suitable to them

– even at evenings and weekends – to reduce the time they have to be away from their regular tasks. “This is not the end of in-person training,” Scott says, “some will always want it.” But DG Online Training has shown that remote learning and invigilated examinations can deliver the quality that is needed.

Indeed, as one satisfied customer said recently: “The online course is extremely easy to navigate, allows you to go at your own pace (and pause it when the kids need picking up from school) and provides practice exam material and review quizzes. Overall I’m really pleased with the course and will absolutely be completing all further training online rather than in the classroom. I highly recommend this course.”

That quality will extend to the introduction of competency-based training and assessment (CBT-A), the concept being brought into the dangerous goods by air sector from 2023. This is, Paul Horner says, “the most radical change in air training for about 30 years” but he feels that the airlines have got it covered. The biggest problems are likely to lie upstream with the shippers, especially smaller companies, for whom it will be a big change. DG Online Training can help support them through the process and is already doing so by carrying out on-the-job evaluations.

That is clearly not the end of things: DG Online Training has already branched out into the maritime sector, offering International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code training, and will continue to expand and update its training courses. In the meantime, it has revamped its branding and website, which is well worth a look – or call them on +44 (0) 800 644 6799.

[www.dgonline.training](http://www.dgonline.training)

# DANGEROUS GOODS ONLINE TRAINING