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PHILLIPS & COHEN WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR SAMARITANS ACADEMY.

Company recognised for work in dealing with distressed debtors

A campaign that sees debt collectors and Samaritans working together through training, to ensure positive outcomes even in the most sensitive cases has won recognition in a national award.

Phillips & Cohen Associates (UK), Ltd. won the Best Publicity Campaign at the CSA/DBSG* Conference in September for 'Samaritans Academy' – an initiative that in the judges' opinion showed 'great originality'. Chairman of the judging panel Sean Feast, Director of communications agency The AGA Group, said that the concept not only demonstrated a distinct point of difference, but also "a clear desire to instigate change."

Phillips & Cohen is the founding member of *Samaritans Academy* - a training initiative, set up by the national helpline charity, designed to help businesses equip their staff with the skills to manage customers in emotional distress and to reduce stress in their own workplace.

Adam Cohen, CEO at Phillips & Cohen, sees training as fundamental in demonstrating its commitment to treating customers with dignity and understanding: "The economic climate has caused a significant increase in the levels of financial hardship experienced across Britain and the credit industry simply has to respond," he says.

"A survey by Samaritans in November last year showed that One in every eight calls made to the service was linked to financial stress and this is a real issue for all businesses in the sector."

Phillips & Cohen specialises in assisting consumers through difficult circumstances and Cohen believes it is essential that its staff possess the necessary tool kit to enable them to deal with people, and an environment, where consumers are in financial and emotional distress.

The company will also signpost callers to Samaritans where customers are particularly distressed, ensuring that they receive the specialist help they require: "This sets a new benchmark in customer service" Cohen adds.

Peter Wallwork, Chief Executive of the CSA to which Phillips & Cohen belongs, says that the new Academy has his full support: "The initiative by Phillips & Cohen Associates reflects well on the individual business and our industry as being genuinely committed to working with debtors with respect and compassion wherever we can."

In receiving the award, Nick Cherry, Site Director of Phillips & Cohen said he was obviously delighted: "Being nationally recognised means that we have been benchmarked against the very best and come out on

top. The Award now gives both Phillips & Cohen and the CSA an opportunity to build on the campaign and demonstrate that there is real and positive change occurring within the credit industry.”

** Credit Services Association and Debt Buyers and Sellers Group.*

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Notes to editors

Phillips & Cohen Associates (UK) Ltd

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