Celebrations as supermarket call centre reaches its 15th birthday

STAFF at Tesco's customer service centre in Dundee celebrated the 15th anniversary of its opening.

They include 48 staff who joined on the opening day and remain at the centre who were treated to a meal at Mains Castle.

A week-long series of activities included free lunches for all, carnival games and cash prizes.

Now with 849 staff, the centre is in the former HQ of supermarket chain William Low. The building was decommissioned for over a year shortly after Tesco bought out William Low in 1994 in a £257m deal. It re-opened in mid-1996, as Tesco moved its customer services operation to Dundee, creating 150 jobs.

A sister site in Cardiff opened five years ago, and now boasts a similar number of staff.

The manager of the Dundee centre, Jamie Hughes, said: "It's amazing to look at the changes over a relatively period of time. It's hard to imagine that when we opened, the internet was still in its infancy and many of the tasks we carry out now were done via fax.

Celebrating: Ian Naylor, director of customer services, and Jamie Hughes, centre manager, at Mains castle

"We're very proud of the number of jobs and careers that have been made here over the last decade and a half. The growth has been tremendous, and it shows no sign of stopping. With the busy Christmas season fast approaching, we'll be needing over 100 additional staff in the coming months.

"We're very lucky to have so many loyal and committed staff to help us over the years. It was great to take some time to thank our people for all their hard work over the years."

DUNDEE FACTS AND FIGURES

18m calls per year (2m minutes in one week in December	Each year staff at the centre raise money for charity – nearly £500,000 since the centre opened.
849 staff (203 SVQ candidates), one third part time	Homeworking, introduced in July last year, employs 33 people. Set to rise to 100 by end-2011
Annual wage bill: £19m	£1.25m spent last year on staff learning and development
Age range 16-68 (average: 34)	
Growth: average of 100 new jobs for each of the last five years	

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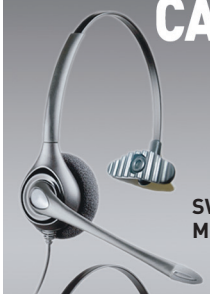

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