

Everyone's
talking about
Apprenticeships





I hear good things about Apprenticeships

“At a time when there is a perceived ‘brain drain’, Apprenticeships are invaluable in supporting the work of the manufacturing industry”

Geoff Matthews, Head of the Honda Institute, Honda UK

Honda UK is a household name manufacturing and selling cars, motorcycles and power equipment networks. It employs 200 apprentices across the country.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

To tackle the shortage of qualified engineering staff, Honda UK have set up their own engineering academy – the Honda Institute. Geoff Matthews, Head of the Honda Institute, explains: ‘At a time when there is a perceived “brain drain”, Apprenticeships are invaluable in supporting the work of the manufacturing industry.’

‘We all know that your people are your greatest asset but this is only ever true if your people have the

right skills to do their jobs. Untrained people are your greatest liability,’ says Geoff.

What works for Honda UK?

Every year 40 technicians graduate from the Institute as qualified apprentices. The three-year training takes place at the Honda Institute, local dealerships and Doncaster Garage Training Association.

‘The Institute has become the benchmark for specialist training and personal development across all our European divisions. The apprentices graduating from the Institute are celebrated and seen as the new breed of engineers who will ensure continued growth in the UK,’ explains Geoff.

‘We have some of the best facilities in the world, not just at a technical level but for IT skills, commercial training and personal development too. By integrating this with Apprenticeships we are able to offer school leavers and adult learners all the skills necessary to make a real impact in the automotive, motorcycle and power equipment sectors. They’ll continue to play a vital role in Honda’s training programme for some time to come.’

“Apprenticeships provide Royal Mail with a professional edge.”

Sally Timmins, Training Manager, Royal Mail

The Royal Mail Group plc employs 200,000 staff in the UK. It operates under three brands in the UK: Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide and Post Office Ltd. It runs the letters and parcels businesses as well as Post Office branches.

The company employs 300 customer services apprentices in its English call centres throughout the country.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

Sally Timmins, Training Manager at Royal Mail, says: ‘Apprenticeships provide Royal Mail with a professional edge – important both to our existing customers and when we are competing for new business.’

The opportunity to take an Apprenticeship in customer services also acts as an incentive for young people to join the company.

Vicki Clement, a qualified Royal Mail apprentice, comments: ‘It was the chance to undertake an Apprenticeship that attracted me to Royal Mail. My qualifications are recognised nationally, and through them I not only gain increased confidence in my work, but career development opportunities as well. I would recommend an Apprenticeship to anyone.’

What works for Royal Mail?

‘Apprenticeships add value to Royal Mail by contributing to a workforce with highly developed

skills and confidence,’ explains Sally Timmins.

‘Apprenticeships work because they follow a logical and precise path, delivering continuous professional and personal development to our staff. The qualifications our workforce gain encourages career progression within Royal Mail, as well as being universally recognised.’

“Apprenticeships suit our business needs”

Trevor Lacey, ABRO's Training Manager

Army Base Repair Organisation (ABRO) is an engineering company that offers repair and manufacturing services worldwide. Based in Telford, it employs about 2,000 staff.

It currently has 54 apprentices in mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

ABRO find recruiting young people with the right skills is becoming increasingly difficult. ABRO refurbishes equipment – from battle tanks to binoculars – so their staff need to have a wide variety of specialist skills.

Apprenticeships offer ABRO many benefits. They equip staff with

specialist skills that suit the diverse needs of the organisation, provide a flexible workforce with nationally recognised qualifications and help with staff retention.

What works for ABRO?

Approximately 500 of the company's 2,000 workforce are qualified apprentices who hold positions throughout the organisation.

Trevor Lacey, ABRO's Training Manager, explains: ‘ABRO puts great emphasis on training our people to develop the skills the company needs within our own workforce. Apprenticeships suit our business needs.’

“Industry must make real investment, now, to boost the skills and productivity of employees”

Rod Kenyon, Director, British Gas Engineering Academy

“Apprenticeships enable us to build a pool of trained young people”

Sue Aston, Personnel Director, James Beattie PLC

British Gas believes investing in their staff is the only way to combat skills shortages in their industry. About 500 of their staff are currently on Apprenticeships in Gas Installation and Maintenance.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

‘Industry must play its part, and rather than simply complain about skills shortages, it must make real investment, now, to boost the skills and productivity of employees,’ says Rod Kenyon, Director of British Gas’ Engineering Academy.

He says: ‘It is very common these days to hear companies claim that their people are their greatest asset – that needs to be translated into action.’

What works for British Gas?

To address the national shortage of qualified servicing and installation engineers, British Gas has invested in its own Engineering Academy.

At the Academy, trainees learn about the full range of domestic gas appliances and systems. During their 12 to 14 month course they will also have periods of work experience where they work alongside qualified engineers on real jobs.

At the end of their training and if they are successful, they are awarded an N/SVQ in Gas Installation and Maintenance at Level 3.

British Gas successfully uses Apprenticeships to equip their

staff with the skills they need to work confidently on their own. ‘The quality of the training is absolutely brilliant. We were taught in small groups of 12 so there was a lot of one-to-one teaching if you needed it’ explains Daniella Savery, who recently completed her Apprenticeship at the Academy.

‘I will now have a buddy for the next week, who will go out with me on jobs. After that I will be assessed again and then I am on my own!’

James Beattie PLC employ 2,500 staff in their department stores. They offer Apprenticeships in Retail and Administration and over 60 of their former apprentices are in management positions within the company.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

Sue Aston, Beatties’ Personnel Director, believes an increased demand for experienced retail staff has led to a shortage of enthusiastic, flexible and capable people in selling and customer service.

She says: ‘Apprenticeships attract new people to the industry and enables young people without retail experience to develop the necessary skills... Apprenticeships

also help us to identify and nurture those with the potential and desire to build a successful career in retailing.’

What works for James Beattie PLC?

Beatties use Apprenticeships as an effective training tool to achieve high standards of staff competence. The training is tailored to cover the company’s needs. And Beatties’ managers, 90 of whom are trained assessors, work with the trainees daily to provide individual support.

Beatties find that Apprenticeships are an ideal way to train young people new to retail. ‘As well as undertaking training and development general to the retail trade, apprentices also learn about

Beatties’ methods and ethos which helps them fit more quickly into the company.’

‘Apprenticeships enable us to build a pool of trained young people committed to Beatties and able to deliver the customer service and selling skills our customers want,’ explains Sue Aston.

“Through Apprenticeships we are gaining qualified staff who are helping to up-skill the caring profession”

Joan Chappell, HICA

HICA Specialised Care Homes, a not-for-profit independent care provider, manage homes for older people, people with learning disabilities and a homecare service in the Humberside area. HICA offers Apprenticeships in Care and Catering to its 1,200 staff.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

HICA believe Apprenticeships help to increase the skill level in the caring profession. HICA's Joan Chappell explains: 'By encouraging our employees to take Apprenticeships we are looking after their interests and our own. We are gaining qualified staff who are helping to up-skill the caring profession which improves the standard of care to our clients.'

What works for HICA?

A learning provider helped them to integrate the requirements of the Apprenticeship into everyday working patterns. HICA are concentrating on encouraging existing staff to opt onto Apprenticeships and obtain qualifications.

Joan Chappell of HICA believes Apprenticeships bring twofold benefits to HICA. First, they increase the number of qualified staff and thereby improve the standard of care to patients. And second, they help HICA meet the criteria set out in The Care Standards Act, which states that 50 per cent of staff should be qualified.

“Apprenticeships and NVQs are a great way of recruiting motivated people”

Leapfrog Day Nurseries

Leapfrog Day Nurseries take training and development seriously. They employ 1,200 people nationally including 60 young people working towards Apprenticeships in Early Years Care and Education, plus over 100 staff studying for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in Early Years Care and Education.

What makes Apprenticeships such a great idea?

Lower salaries coupled with high turnover rates can make recruiting and retaining staff a problem in the early years sector. Jenny Insull, Leapfrog's Training Manager, says: 'I think Apprenticeships and NVQs are a great way of recruiting people who are motivated. And it is a good

way of encouraging young people into early years or childcare.'

What works for Leapfrog?

Leapfrog found that the training they offered improved staff retention. Apprentices seemed more committed because they had a qualification to aim for. This meant they were more enthusiastic and willing to learn. 'One of the things that staff like about Leapfrog is the access we offer to learning and training, including Apprenticeships,' says Jenny Insull.

'Apprenticeships and NVQs also give us some quality control over the training our staff receive. We can train staff to our standards and we know the calibre of our future workforce.'

But Leapfrog do not just offer training in Early Years Care and Education. One of their central office staff gained an Apprenticeship in Business Administration. This gave her the added flexibility to be able to move between personnel and marketing roles and gain more skills – becoming even more valuable to the business.

I never knew
they did so much

