

Date of issue
February 2008
Publication
number em-
13engmasterclass-
pr-feb2008

ENGINEERING MASTERCLASS FOR LEICS KIDS

Engineering experts gave young people an insight into their industry – to explain why apprentices are its “lifeblood.”

Leicestershire-based company Slack & Parr Ltd visited a Shepshed secondary school for a full day’s workshop with the pupils, as part of the first ever national Apprenticeship Week, from 25-29 February.

The event coincided with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Apprenticeship Week, which aimed to celebrate the success of apprentices and to promote the mutual benefits of Apprenticeships for both employers and employees.

Beverley Rowland, programmes manager at Shepshed High School, said the experience was extremely useful for students.

“The students were able to view aspects of industry that they would not normally be able to access,” she said.

“The range of activities offered supports them in making informed GCSE choices. Visitors from industry and colleges give the students an opportunity to step outside of their ‘school world’ and look at what the future may possibly hold.”

Slack & Parr Ltd has been training up apprentices since the 1960s, however, in recent years they have noticed a skills drought in manufacturing and at all levels of engineering.

There are currently 3,625 apprentices in the Leicestershire region.

Richard Wilson, operations director at Slack & Parr Ltd, said apprentices are vital to keep businesses moving forward. “This constant source of a progressive young workforce has enabled us to keep the company at the cutting edge of technology and education.”

“The Apprenticeship scheme empowers our trainees to become the best in their field and in turn increases our level of productivity. We firmly believe our Apprenticeship training programme is the lifeblood of our company, as 48% of our employees have been apprentice trained at Slack & Parr and of those 12% hold managerial or senior positions,” added Richard.

Slack & Parr Ltd currently employs 27 apprentices and one of the company’s key features is the high level of personalised training for recruits, which develops a strong and loyal bond between the managers and the learners.

The first ever Apprenticeship Week aims to provide a strong call to action to employers to take on apprentices. Hundreds of Leicestershire businesses are being targeted in a county-wide awareness campaign aimed at getting young apprentices into jobs.

New research released this week shows that hiring apprentices has a hugely positive impact on overall business performance. In an independent survey of organisations that employ apprentices, more than three-quarters of people felt their apprenticeship programme made them more competitive.

83% of employers rely on their Apprenticeship programme to provide the skilled workers they need for the future, the survey said, while two-thirds of respondents said they would struggle to find trained staff with the skills they need without their Apprenticeship programmes.

Stephen Gardner, director of Apprenticeships from the LSC, said: “These survey results confirm the significant benefits that employers receive with Apprenticeships, from increased competitiveness and overall productivity to improved staff retention and motivation.

“Apprentices are helping to build the workforce which employers need for future success. There are currently 130,000 companies reaping the benefits of Apprenticeships, and we are calling for even more employers to open their doors to apprentices.”

ends

For more information, contact Liz or Katherine at Cartwright Communications on 07769 713919.

There are currently 240,000 apprentices working in over 130,000 organisations in England alone, across 80 different sectors of industry.

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Notes to Editors: -

Learning and Skills Council

- The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands