

Engineering success in a mans world

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Formula one enthusiast, Gemma Stronach is racing ahead, thanks to an Apprenticeship in engineering.

The 18-year-old from North Shields enrolled on her Apprenticeship with Rolls Royce in 2005 after deciding that continuing in learning at college was not for her.

Three years on and she is now working for Cundall - a multidisciplinary engineering consultancy offering civil, structural, electrical and mechanical engineering services.

As part of the course at Newcastle College, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East, Gemma has completed a First Diploma, National Certificate and NVQ Level 2 in Engineering and is working towards her NVQ Level 3.

At Cundall, Gemma works with the electrical engineering department and is responsible for providing support to the engineers and preparing design work for all of the electrical services within buildings. This includes schools, cinemas and office blocks.

She says: "After finishing my GCSEs, I knew that I didn't want to go to college and was keen to find a job. I had really enjoyed engineering at school, but was well aware that it is quite a male dominated industry.

"Through my Apprenticeship I have been able to gain hands on experience which has been complemented with theoretical training and study. The working environment has also boosted my confidence and I hope that I can inspire others to break the gender stereotypes and pursue careers or interests that they are passionate about, regardless of gender."

Stephen Clough, partner at Cundall added:

"Gemma has progressed enormously since joining us in 2006. She has been able to transfer the skills, confidence and experience that she has gained from the apprenticeship to her role here at Cundall."

Gemma is due to complete her Apprenticeship in March 2009 and plans to enrol on a degree course to become a fully qualified electrical engineer.

Chris Roberts, regional director, LSC North East, said:

"It is important that young people are encouraged to view a variety of careers and not be afraid to consider working in industries that are viewed as the preserve of the male or female worker – such as construction or beauty therapy. By breaking the long held gender stereotypes we are offering more opportunities for young people and employers – who will benefit from motivated recruits which are passionate about their chosen vocation."

ENDS

Editor's note:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

Picture caption:

Gemma Stronach - Engineering success through training.

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