

LANCASHIRE EMPLOYER RECOGNISED AT NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2007

Date of issue 25 June 2007
Publication number NWR-067

Accrington based construction company, Craig Hambling Ltd, has been recognised for its highly successful Apprenticeship programme at the 2007 national Apprenticeship Awards. The awards took place at a prestigious ceremony in London, hosted by TV presenter Nick Knowles.

Now in their fourth year, the Awards, managed by the Learning and Skills Council, are designed to recognise the hard work and commitment of young people currently on, or who have recently completed an Apprenticeship, and employers who are successfully using Apprenticeships to improve business performance. This year the awards attracted more than 1,000 entries.

Craig Hambling Ltd, highly commended in the Employer of the Year (10-49 employees) category, developed its own Apprenticeship programme in conjunction with local training provider, Accrington and Rossendale College.

Robert Sharples of Craig Hambling Ltd commented. "Through this programme we have ensured a steady stream of enthusiastic employees, who we can trust to work to the high standards of skill and dedication benchmarked as standard for our company."

Craig Hambling Ltd pro-actively works on engaging local, young people via classroom talks at schools, to demonstrate and explain the benefits of undertaking an Apprenticeship with the Company.

Awards presenter, Nick Knowles, was struck by the high calibre of entrants and said that he was a big advocate of Apprenticeships, for both young people and employers. He commented: "One thing I've learnt from my DIY SOS show is what a difference skilled professionals can make to your home. Apprentices turn up, take something on, and finish it - that's why Apprenticeships are so successful. I'm deeply impressed, and these Awards have been truly inspiring. It's been a privilege to see so many successful employers and apprentices here tonight."

Stephen Gardner, Director of Apprenticeships at the Learning and Skills Council said: "It really is awe-inspiring to witness the dedication, drive and enthusiasm of these apprentices - not only those who have achieved so much to win awards, but all apprentices around the country who are pursuing their goals."

"It is clear that to remain competitive, we need to ensure more people are learning useful skills and Apprenticeships have shown themselves to be very successful at making that happen, while giving people and businesses real opportunities to succeed. The Awards are now in their fourth year – a positive sign of the outstanding contribution individuals and UK businesses are making to raise skills levels and improve productivity and competitiveness nationally. This year's Awards entries have been first rate and the winners deserve recognition and huge respect."

Speaking at the event, Skills Minister Phil Hope MP said: "Thanks to dynamic young people, enlightened employers and a supportive delivery system, I see a bright future for Apprenticeships. They stimulate innovation, give businesses the skills they need and provide opportunities for individuals to fulfil their potential. The Apprenticeship programme makes a real difference to all concerned and I'm delighted to see such great examples at the Awards tonight."

Sponsors for the 2007 Apprenticeship Awards are:

- City & Guilds (Premier Sponsor)
- QCA (Apprentice of the Year Category sponsor)

- BT Openreach (Advanced Apprentice of the Year Category Sponsor)
- British Gas (Personal Achiever of the Year Category Sponsor)
- BAE Systems (Young Apprentice of the Year Category Sponsor)
- Edexcel (Employer of the Year Category Sponsor)
- L'Oreal Professional; Bentley; Whitbread; O2; e-skillsUK; The Communications Network and Connexions (Gift, Bespoke and Table Sponsors)

Ends

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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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