

TRAVIS PERKINS PLC

Andy Rayner, Director of LEAP Apprenticeships and Early Careers, Travis Perkins plc

Offering Apprenticeship levels 3,4,5 (to both internal and external candidates, including others employed by other, non-Travis Perkins plc construction companies)

Travis Perkins plc acknowledges the challenges facing the industry: according to the UK Green Building Council, 25% of the UK's carbon footprint is attributable to the built environment, this rises to 42% if transport is included, it is believed over 10,000 people leave the industry annually, it has an increasingly ageing workforce, a workforce that is predominantly white and male. In addition, the industry needs to change processes; embracing digitisation and new ways of doing things in a very traditional environment.

TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT APPRENTICES TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES

The range of these challenges requires different approaches to tackle them, as such, Travis Perkins plc facilitates two different apprentice intakes:

1. Upskilling those who are already in the industry
2. Recruiting new people into the industry

As a leading partner to construction, they see it as a clear responsibility to upskill their own colleagues, as well as the wider industry, and use apprenticeships to modernise construction and attract, grow and retain new talent.

APPROACH 1: UPSKILLING THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY IN THE INDUSTRY

There are multiple benefits and impacts from upskilling those already in the workforce:

- Improving Maths and English skills as preparation for the apprentice – including “life changing” discoveries and diagnosis of learning difficulties in adulthood
- Improving digital skills
- Becoming ready for change in the industry
- Impacting the wider community through outreach programmes and community focused projects
- Formalising ways of working, consolidating “on the job” experiential experience into structures and systems

In addition, historically, people progressed through experiential learning – through trial and error and learning from mistakes – with limited formal management training. Although this approach has worked for over 200 years, it is not the best way for people to learn and progress, especially in today's environment. Managers needed greater support and training to help them have the right systems and structures in place, to enable them to deliver on their role, to ensure the smooth running of branches, and to improve and update new digital systems and reduce the role of learning through trial and error.

“ We have traditionally had many managers who haven't necessarily set out or been trained or qualified for their roles, they've got there through the work they have done. This is where the CMI work becomes important as our managers are running significant operations ” says Andy Rayner, Director of LEAP Apprenticeships and Early Careers.

Travis Perkins plc sees building positive relationships with the local community as part of the wider impact that these apprentices have. Every apprentice who learns new digital skills is challenged to help train a further 10 (who can be internal or external). This creates a ripple effect through the wider business and local community. In addition, the projects individuals complete are encouraged to be community-focused to improve resources or facilities locally, such as refurbishing a local skate park.

“ Our management apprentices go through a digital data module and we ask them to share that with 10 people as part of the apprenticeship, so if we take 1000 people through that and give them enhanced skills, that could reach 10,000 people. ”

In particular, the requirement to have foundational English and Maths can be “life changing”, especially for those who left school with limited qualifications before joining Travis Perkins plc. Through this requirement, Travis Perkins plc has helped identify people who need additional support (e.g. due to dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism) by providing them with the support they need to succeed in these areas for the first time. Often, these are people who have been successful in their role, but this additional support helps to unlock other opportunities.

“ We've had people my age who when they go through the first assessment have a reading age of 10 but they're senior managers. It's amazing when you talk to people who have gone through that experience, often very clever people, but they have limited reading and maths skills. It's life changing. As an organisation we would fight tooth and nail to keep that requirement in place because we see the benefit on adult learners who might have been failed by the education system. ”

APPROACH 2: RECRUITING NEW PEOPLE INTO THE INDUSTRY

One of the primary benefits of using apprenticeships to bring new people into the industry is the potential to recruit a more diverse workforce, including more people under the age of 25 and more women. Travis Perkins plc recognises that to be successful in the future, they need to recruit the next generation of talent in order to meet the future needs of the construction

industry. The sector is open to everyone and all can add value and bring something to the sector – they need to know that it is an option and to be given a way in.

Andy Rayner says ““ We need more diversity of thinking ””

““ Around 80% of the workforce is male with an average age that’s increasing all the time. ””

Part of the strength of apprenticeships is that they do not require any existing knowledge or experience of the sector. This aligns well with the outreach Travis Perkins plc does with local colleges to talk about the industry more broadly. Apprenticeships are a “vehicle” into the sector for those who might not have previously considered it as an industry “for them”.

Apprenticeships are showing a tangible impact on improving the diversity of new joiners: 38% of entry level recruits via an apprenticeship are female, compared to 12% who join at entry level on a non-apprenticeship basis. The majority of externally recruited apprentices are under 25 and other key metrics including diversity of backgrounds and ethnicity are all increasing.

““ It’s been effective in bringing that more diverse population in. ””

INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY: FROM ENTRY LEVEL 3 APPRENTICE, TO RUNNING A BRANCH BY AGE 25

There are numerous individual examples of success within the business. Andy shared the example of someone who joined the business as part of a Level 3 apprenticeship – an entry level role at the age of 20. Following successful completion of that first apprenticeship, he enrolled on a level 5 apprenticeship to further develop his skills. Within three or four months of completing his level 5, he was promoted to a branch manager at the age of 25 and was responsible for a £8m business.

““ He’s probably a little bit of an outlier, but it’s not exceptional, there are others with similar stories... At one point it took 15 years to go from entry level to branch manager but apprenticeships have got that down now to about 6 years. ””

A SECTOR CONVENING ROLE

The challenges facing the construction and supply sector are bigger than Travis Perkins plc can solve alone. In addition to training their own apprentices, Travis Perkins plc are using the knowledge and experience they have to train others in the industry to help upskill and level up the industry as a whole. This is an area they want to develop and to be able to offer more widely including SMEs who could benefit from apprenticeships. Ideally in the next five years, this will be expanded to the wider construction sector as well, not just construction supply.

““ We’re already training people from the other major multiples...We want to expand across the sector, we have 10,000 people leaving the sector every year so I want 10,000 apprentices. That gets the construction supply sector working then we can take that into the wider construction sector. We can help the customer base go through a change and we can be constructing differently. ””