



ENGAGE  
FOR  
SUCCESS



# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

## A Better Way To Work

March 2018

**Chair:** Katherine Bassey

**Coordinator:** Hannah Johnson

**Apprenticeships**  
National Apprenticeship Week  
5 to 9 March 2018

# WITH THANKS TO:

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# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

Forward thinking employers are creating game changing apprenticeships for both new and existing staff. They are boosting engagement, building talent pipelines and increasing productivity through addressing skills gaps.



Apprentices have transformed our workplace culture with their enthusiasm, ideas and high levels of engagement.

*Yorkshire Housing*

We wanted to improve the socioeconomic and ethnic composition of our teams as well as tackle gender bias in a number of roles; we thought one way of doing this was through our Apprenticeship programme.

*Royal Opera House*

Our apprentices have been a huge asset to the company: they allow us to take control of our recruitment and grow our own talent.

*Pickford Move Management Limited*

Almost two-thirds of our apprentices are still with the business a decade later.

*Mercedes Benz*

As leaders I believe it is our responsibility to create an environment that enables our staff to give of their best and to realise their potential regardless of age, ethnicity or social background. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for staff to realise their potential and ensure that we achieve better outcomes.

*Shaun McNally Chief Executive of the Legal Aid Agency*



# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

Engage for Success have been exploring how the [four enablers](#) of employee engagement can help you build a great apprenticeship strategy. We have top tips, information links, blogs and video clips to guide and inspire you! If you'd like to join us, or contribute your story we'd love to hear from you – please contact [Hannah@engageforsucccess.org](mailto:Hannah@engageforsucccess.org).

Here is our work so far on Strategic Narrative:

## STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

Here's how to create a compelling apprenticeship strategy, that will boost employee and customer engagement and help you to stand out as an employer of choice in a competitive skills market. The apprenticeship levy\* and government contributions towards the cost of apprenticeships are a big incentive, but the key drivers to apprenticeships should be based on organisational need. Apprenticeships should be embedded into your strategic vision and workforce development plans.

Once you have the strategic view of your current and future skills needs, you can map your apprenticeship requirements accordingly. With drivers and business challenges established, it's easier to put in place the measurement criteria for success -improved employee engagement, increase in sales and / or productivity, or retention of staff.

The tips on this site will help you to develop a strategy that can be communicated across your organisation, providing clarity on your apprenticeship programme, so all staff understand why apprenticeships are good for your business.

## TOP TIPS

- Generate discussion with your key influencers, by posing questions.
- What are your business challenges to achieving organisational success, not only today but where you want to be in the future?
- How engaged are your staff with your purpose and vision?
- Do people understand and value what you are trying to achieve?
- What skills do your workforce need to meet these organisational challenges? (A skills audit can help here)
- In a competitive skills market, how attractive as an employer are you to talented people looking for stretch and challenge?
- Do you want a centralised or de-centralised programme and who will manage it? Who should your training provider be? How do you select them?
- Who will implement your strategy? It's a great role for someone with both big picture vision and the focus to work through the how, why, what, where and who. Don't forget to read the funding rules.
- Have you consulted with your trade union, union learning or staff representatives, to develop an apprenticeship agreement with arrangements for pay and conditions of service?
- Gaining the support of your leadership team and existing workforce is critical to the success of any apprenticeship programme.
- And when you are up and running - celebrate your successes! Run an internal ambassador or champion group – generate PR in the local press – get involved with the Apprenticeship Awards and National Apprenticeship week to promote your story!



STRATEGIC  
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Since April 2017 **all UK employers who have an annual pay bill of more than £3 million have had to pay** the levy. For more information, including how the levy applies in the devolved nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, please see our [information section](#) on page 8.

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# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

## ENGAGING MANAGERS

Leadership and management is often cited as one of the major concerns within business. In fact Investors in People reported in 2015, that bad management cost the UK £84bn. Sometimes organisations promote talented specialist staff, without assessing their people management skills – and may lose a specialist and gain a poor manager.

There are two important considerations here for your apprenticeship strategy.

Firstly your apprentices need to be supported by able managers, with an aptitude for spotting talent and encouraging growth. Your apprentices may be totally new to the world of work and unfamiliar with expectations, or longer standing staff who are keen to grow their skills. All apprentices will be encouraged throughout their programmes to think for themselves and may well challenge the way things have been done to date. So your apprentice managers need to be up for the challenge and willing to explore new ideas – it's how organisations grow.

And secondly there are new leadership and managerial apprenticeships, which offer you the chance to boost these very skills. You can both bring new leadership and management talent into an organisation, and up-skill existing staff.

### TOP TIPS

- Engage your managers in your apprenticeship strategy and planning – from choosing which apprenticeships they need, to procuring training providers to managing your apprenticeship programme.
- Make sure that managers understand that they are key to the apprentices' learning experience and are aware of the 20% off the job learning requirement for all apprentices.
- Set up a network or regular meetings for managers of apprentices to share ideas and support one another. Build case studies and success stories to inspire others.
- Encourage and support your managers to run team briefings, so that everyone understands what apprentices will be doing and where they fit in the bigger picture.
- Enable your managers and improve engagement by offering leadership and management apprenticeships to new or existing staff – you can choose from supervisor, to team leader to Director levels.
- Consider your succession planning.
- Leaders of small businesses can access apprentices.



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# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

## EMPLOYEE VOICE

Apprentices are developing a range of new skills, and may be new into your organisation. So they are well placed to spot opportunities for improvement. Giving your apprentices forums in which to provide feedback on their experience and to make suggestions for change demonstrates you value them. Apprentices may be new to the world of work, returning to work or changing career. They may span multiple generations with different perspectives. It's important to give them a chance to have their voice heard in an environment they feel comfortable with.

When introducing apprenticeships it is important existing team members and line managers support the programme. Giving them an opportunity to ask questions and understand what the expectations of the apprentice are will help to achieve this.

There are many ways to encourage your apprentices and their managers and colleagues to feedback. Some may be more suitable to your organisation than others. It is important to understand your organisation and its culture before introducing these to make sure you choose the tools that will have the most impact.

Speak to your training provider as they may be able to help with some of the internal communications to provide more detailed information on the apprenticeships offered.

### TOP TIPS

- Consider setting up a buddy and or mentor for your apprentices. Where possible use a former apprentice as they have already walked the path and overcome obstacles so they have invaluable advice due to their experience.
- Regular feedback sessions with key stakeholders and apprentices
- Set up peer networking groups as an opportunity to share experience and ideas.
- Give apprentices a voice in their work – a real say in some aspect of their job in a way that challenges them. Give them ownership and some real responsibility eg allowing apprentices to supervise school work experience placements, work based projects and making senior leadership accessible to enable apprentices to access management and be heard at the highest level. This would also allow opportunities for upward mentoring where the apprentices impart their knowledge onto senior management..
- In the run up to recruiting apprentices go to team meetings to share why you are recruiting and answer any questions
- Involve colleagues, including former or current apprentices, in the recruitment process. Include them as interviewers, assessors at assessment centres and presenters at job fairs.
- Introduce your apprentices to any staff trade union or association representatives, who will explain their role and how they can help with any issues.
- Social media and intranet – communicate progress to the whole organisation and the wider sector by sharing, or encouraging your apprentices to share their achievements. Invite questions.
- Get your apprentices involved in real work-based projects.
- Have role models come into meetings: involve apprentices within communications with teams about the benefits of apprentices.



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EMPLOYEE VOICE



INTEGRITY



# ENGAGING WITH APPRENTICESHIPS

## ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRITY

Apprenticeships can be for new staff, on their first steps into the workforce or for improving the skills of existing staff. In either case they are an opportunity to build the integrity of your organisation and support the long-term development of your people.

In both cases it's important to understand that the aim is to give opportunities and build capabilities. Make sure the organisation supports the ethos and involve your people. Be clear on whether your apprenticeships are long-term opportunities, leading to a career or a chance to gain the skills to get a job elsewhere. Ensure fair and transparent recruitment. Be up front if you are targeting a particular group or demographic.

Have transparent policies, information sharing and openness. There should be no say-do gap, here as anywhere in your work.

### TOP TIPS

- Make everybody in the organisation aware of the opportunities – whether it is for new staff, or for programmes for current employees.
- Ensure your apprenticeship strategy links to your company's policies eg diversity and inclusion, lone worker and health and safety policy.
- Consider using the opportunities apprenticeships present to improve diversity in your workforce.
- Treat apprentices as you would any member of staff. They are a part of your organisation's future.
- Ensure all apprentices and line managers receive a full induction into their apprenticeships. Consider providing a mentor and encourage apprentices to buddy up.
- Consider paying the at least Living Wage – your apprentices will be engaged in real work and should be paid accordingly.
- Consult with your trade union, union learning or staff representatives, to develop an apprenticeship agreement with arrangements for pay and conditions of service.
- Be clear on whether your apprenticeships are long-term opportunities, leading to a career or a chance to gain the skills to get a job elsewhere.
- Be clear in managing expectations, and giving clear feedback and a referral route if somebody proves not to be suitable.
- Fully support the programme of development. Expect them to spend at least one day in five on their learning. Those not on a full time equivalent may be required to spend a greater proportion of their working time in learning and the programme may be longer.



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# FURTHER RESOURCES

## INFORMATION

Government information on employing apprentices:

<https://www.gov.uk/take-on-an-apprentice>

National Society of Apprentices have lots of information:

<http://nsoa.co.uk/>

Apprenticeships should be matched to job roles, and all apprentices should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. You can find out what apprenticeships are available here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

Apprenticeships are proven to deliver business benefits. Here is a link to a government infographic that outlines just some of those benefits:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/230389/Apprenticeship\\_Evaluation\\_Infographic\\_-\\_V2\\_-\\_FINAL\\_-\\_190813.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230389/Apprenticeship_Evaluation_Infographic_-_V2_-_FINAL_-_190813.pdf)

Link to Find Apprenticeship Training:

<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.sfa.bis.gov.uk/>

Questions to ask a training provider:

<http://apprenticemakers.org.uk/what-to-ask-when-youre-choosing-an-apprenticeship-training-organisation/>

The 5% Club: <https://www.5percentclub.org.uk>

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/routes-work/apprenticeships-guide>

Investors In People 2017 Apprenticeship perception poll:

[www.investorsinpeople.com](http://www.investorsinpeople.com)

Find the TUC Apprenticeship Toolkit at: [tuc.org.uk](http://tuc.org.uk)

See UNISON's Apprenticeship Charter here: [UNISON.org.uk/apprentices](http://UNISON.org.uk/apprentices)

## CASE STUDIES

Here are some more detailed case studies from organisations and why they engaged with apprenticeships:

<http://apprenticemakers.org.uk/case-studies/>

