

Leyland Trucks seeks to steer more young people into engineering

Leyland Trucks is reaping the benefits of a pilot employee-training scheme designed to encourage a younger workforce into engineering.

The Career Pathway scheme, introduced at the company's Lancashire manufacturing facility in 2015, offers employees full-time training across a range of engineering roles, to improve their skills and widen their career options.

The scheme allows employees to dedicate 100 percent of their time to learning, leaving their current role and embarking on a two-year plan with structured rotations across assembly engineering, supplier quality assurance and design engineering. In addition, participants are encouraged to complete further-education engineering or project-management courses, to expand the applied learning gained on each rotation.

Leyland Trucks created the program to make sure the talent in its apprentice scheme was fully nurtured and to give its workforce additional opportunities to further their professional education.

Ivan Shearer, Leyland Trucks HR Director, said: "The scheme is proving really popular with employees and has already showed great promise. Taking people out of their current roles and putting them into full-time training represents a significant investment for us. However, we recognize that we are fortunate to have a bank of talented and committed people already employed at Leyland, so we wanted a post-apprentice package specifically aimed at nurturing and developing their skills."

In order to qualify, employees take part in a rigorous interview process including mathematics and verbal-reasoning tests, along with panel interviews.

James Smithies, currently taking part in the scheme, said: "I left school at 16 and completed the apprenticeship scheme at Leyland Trucks. Career Pathway seemed like the perfect opportunity for me to gain a wider knowledge of the overall business and to learn a number of new engineering disciplines that I had not previously had any exposure to. It has already given me many new opportunities to apply my knowledge, interact professionally with senior managers and external stakeholders, raise my professional profile in the company and learn a number of new skills. Upon completion of the scheme, I would like to think that I will be a well-rounded engineer who would be considered for a number of roles in the business and have the confidence and skills to be successful in any of them."

Starbucks joins Movement to Work

Starbucks UK has joined the Movement to Work initiative to fight youth unemployment and is offering around 400 placements to young people.

Movement to Work is a coalition of UK employers that aims to tackle youth unemployment through vocational training and work experience. In particular, it seeks to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is backed by the UK Government, the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry. Offering four to six weeks of vocational training and work experience, the movement aims to get people into paid work, apprenticeships or further education. Since October 2013, Movement to Work has achieved more than 50,000 placements.

Simon Redfern, the Starbucks Vice-President of corporate affairs, commented: "Young people make up our DNA. Over 50 percent of our partners [employees] are under 25. Movement to Work provides us with the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded employers and help to tackle this important issue."

Starbucks will use its existing program with Headstart, where 16 to 24-year-olds can take part in work placements, volunteering and workshops with a view to achieving permanent work.

Victoria Cope, Supply-Chain Lead at Movement to Work, commented: “To date we have brought more than 250 organizations together under the Movement to Work umbrella. Its placement programs create insight and valuable steps into sustainable careers for the UK’s young unemployed. So far, over 50 percent of placements have resulted in employment. We are delighted to have Starbucks come on board and offer even greater options for aspiring young people, enabling them to develop their confidence and enhance their employability.”

Among the founding employers of Movement to Work are Accenture, BAE Systems, Barclays, BT, Centrica, the civil service, Diageo, GSK, HSBC, Marks and Spencer, National Grid, Tesco, Unilever and WPP.

A range of partners, including Jobcentre Plus, the Prince’s Trust, Talent Match and Capita, help employers to source candidates and deliver training.

Amey launches reverse-mentoring program

Engineering and support-services provider Amey has launched a reverse-mentoring program in which senior managers are shown what operational employees do on a daily basis.

The program is expected to deliver benefits including improved employee engagement and communication, resulting in more innovations and efficiencies across the business.

The reverse-mentoring scheme helps leaders to explore in more depth some of the challenges faced by front-line employees, while the mentor has the opportunity to have thoughts and ideas listened to by someone in a more senior position and to be recognized for his or her contribution.

Coral Taylor, inclusion business partner at Amey, said: “We want to deliver the best, most efficient services possible for our clients at the same time as providing an inspiring and collaborative workplace for our employees. Reverse mentoring will help us to access more innovative ideas and new ways of working, as well as encouraging shared learning across our business so we can continually improve our workplaces and the services we deliver.”

Amey, with more than 21,000 employees, is active in utilities, highways, waste management, railways, social housing and facilities management.

Axa employee flies the flag for apprenticeships

Satveer Kaur-Singh, a 22-year-old apprentice with Axa Insurance, is flying the flag for apprenticeships through a debate with the European Commission, European parliamentarians and industry heads in the context of the Alliance for Youth movement.

Axa is one of 200 organizations from 23 European countries engaged with Alliance for Youth, which seeks to double youth training and job opportunities by 2020. All share the mission to reduce youth unemployment by providing meaningful career opportunities.

The debate involved the European commissioner for employment, Marianne Thyssen, who said: “The Alliance for Youth shows how investing in youth is also good for business. I am very pleased that it is stepping up its efforts with a new commitment under the European Alliance for Apprenticeships to offer 230,000 new placements to young people in Europe to secure their first foothold in the labor market. These alliances are making good headway to boost the employability of young people through quality apprenticeship and work opportunities.”

Ben Pike, Managing Director of QA Apprenticeships, said: “Satveer is a fantastic example of how an apprenticeship can transform the life of a young person, who is able to learn and earn at the same time, while building valuable contacts and working for a highly supportive organization. Our core mission is to bring talent into our clients’ organizations, training them in technology, business skills and project management so that they can perform well in our clients’ teams.”

More than 90 percent of QA's apprentices end up in full-time employment after their apprenticeship ends.

Darrell Sansom, Managing Director of Axa Business Insurance, said: "We feel extremely proud that our apprentice Satveer has been asked to the European Parliament, to get her voice heard. Apprentices are such an important part of our business, because young people bring ideas driven by the experience of growing up in the digital era. They add a unique dimension to our teams and eco-system."

Satveer Kaur-Singh said: "My parents were very supportive but we did not know much about apprenticeships and so were unsure if I was making the right decision. I am so glad that I took this route, and now I do not have any student debt hanging over me."

Festo nurtures talent of future

Festo, a manufacturer of automation technology, has developed a range of initiatives for working with young people.

The company, which employs more than 16,000 people worldwide, works closely with schools, colleges and universities. It seeks to nurture apprentices, providing them with the technical and design skills for a career in engineering, and to provide graduate opportunities.

Some 10 percent of Festo's UK staff are science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) ambassadors – volunteers committed to raising engagement in these subjects.

Jacqui Hanbury, a Festo Product Manager and Stem Ambassador, works closely with the local schools, colleges and universities to bring Stem subjects to life. She is particularly interested in attracting women to engineering.

"I love working in engineering and I think it is a shame that more of our young people disregard it as an industry because they do not think it is relevant to them," she commented. "I try to make engineering more relevant, helping them to understand that it is engineers that develop the technology inside their phone, iPad, Xbox and many of the electronic items around them."

The volunteers in Festo that work with young people recognize its importance in helping to attract the best talent to the company. Education establishments recognize that companies such as Festo have an important role to play in providing students with the right attitude, skills and access to the latest technology.

Trisha Goodchild, Stem Co-ordinator at the Northamptonshire University, commented: "Working with organizations such as Festo is crucial for equipping our students with up-to-date knowledge and skills in engineering. It is as a result of our relationships with companies such as Festo that jobs are often offered to our students above graduates from Oxbridge."

Eliza Rawlings, Managing Director at Festo Training and Consulting, said: "We get the cream of the crop. Students with an interest in engineering remember their experience of Festo and that it has a learning culture that they can fit into easily. We have an embedded coaching culture and our mentors are equipped with the skills to work effectively with young people. Our apprentices and graduates are respected members of the organization and as a result a high proportion of our young employees stay with us and are on the way to becoming our business leaders of the future."

Canali's training fits to perfection

Canali, an Italian luxury men's-wear brand, is implementing a unified system to better recruit, develop and manage its people.

The company, founded in 1934 and today employing almost 1,800 people across Europe, the USA, Hong Kong and China, selected software from Cornerstone OnDemand that will help it to: find the right talent; train new hires and engage existing employees with targeted learning and development; provide continuous performance feedback; and reward top performers.

“Canali has a strong tradition and identity that it wants to protect and project into the future. The organizational development processes therefore must be guarded with great care. A technology partner like Cornerstone is right to support the company in the whole area of people management,” said Matteo Bondavalli, Canali group HR and Organization Director.

Vincent Belliveau, Executive Vice-President and General Manager of Europe, Middle East and Africa for Cornerstone OnDemand, said: “By managing all its talent-management processes in Cornerstone’s unified platform, Canali will be equipped with an innovative, cutting-edge software solution that will provide its workforce with the tools and resources they need to succeed now and in the future.”

A family-run company now in its third generation, Canali is a modern-day design and manufacturing group with its own production centers in Italy and more than 1,800 employees worldwide. In addition to its 250 boutiques, the brand can also be found in over 1,000 retail stores in more than 100 countries across the globe.

OmniServe spreads smiles at Heathrow

OmniServ, a UK airline and airport-assistance-services provider, will introduce company-wide training designed to ensure that all the firm’s front-line staff provide good customer service.

OmniServ provides a range of staff for Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL), London, including: “ambassadors” who answer customer questions, provide directions and manage passenger flow around the terminals; VIP hosts; drivers for inter-terminal buses; and employees who provide assistance for unaccompanied minors or passengers with mobility problems.

As part of the Spreading Smiles program staff will be coached in interpersonal skills development and body language so that they come across to travelers as approachable, focused, trustworthy and in control.

Fiona Blakey, Head of Customer Services at OmniServ, said: “Our staff already deliver a brilliant service at Heathrow. However, working with HAL, we identified ways that we could make it even better by encouraging representatives to be warm and open in their communications with airport users so that travelers – particularly those who find the airport a stressful environment – feel comfortable asking for assistance. We want our staff to be “smile-makers,” helping people to enjoy their time at Heathrow.”

The program will involve a series of training sessions aimed at individual staff and team leaders. All training will focus on four key values – friendly, professional, effortless and knowledgeable – and how to live them. Leaders will also get training in how to coach and support the people in their teams as well as ways to improve their own management skills.

OmniServ will also launch a recognition and staff incentive and reward program to support and reinforce the training program. This will sit alongside the company’s existing 110 percent club, which recognizes and rewards OmniServ staff who deliver outstanding service.

Staff will be encouraged to take personal responsibility for, and ownership of, the whole Spreading Smiles program through the recruitment of “smilers” – individuals who will be encouraged to contribute to a forum which will advise management, highlighting potential problem areas and identifying solutions, highlighting improvements and suggesting innovations, and generally being the voice for front-line staff with directors and the board.

Fiona Blakey said: “Heathrow is one of the busiest airports in the world, and our staff are interacting with millions of people every year. Often, they are the face of Heathrow; we want to make sure that that face is friendly, knowledgeable, professional and competent. Spreading Smiles will give our staff the tools they need to deliver a world-class customer experience.”

Electrolux expands its talent-management software

Electrolux, a global appliance manufacturer, is expanding its use of its cloud-based talent-management software to support the execution of its business strategy.

Electrolux, which has been using Cornerstone OnDemand recruitment software for more than a year, plans to expand its systems to cover learning management, performance management, succession planning and compensation management, as well as using Cornerstone Link, the software company's solution for people-data management.

Enhancements to Electrolux's current talent-management initiatives will include: a global repository of employee data to make better business decisions; easier employee access to the right training and development; more efficient compensation management; and consistent and aligned performance, feedback and development plans that are in line with future organizational needs.

"During the last 18 months, we have worked with Cornerstone to make our recruitment module implementation a success," said Andreas Olofsson, Vice-President of HR projects, group HR, Electrolux. "We now look forward to a period of close collaboration and partnership developing the other talent-management functions in order to help our managers to execute business strategy."

"Electrolux has a clear strategy to support the development of its employees, as well as the organization as a whole, by building a better foundation for global HR processes with our unified solution," said Vincent Belliveau, Executive Vice-President and General Manager of Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), Cornerstone OnDemand. "Our solution not only meets the needs of Electrolux's HR team and business leaders, but will also ultimately help employees to realize their potential."

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, Electrolux sells more than 60 million products to customers in more than 150 markets every year.

Atlas Corp urges people to "think big"

UK sales and marketing firm Atlas Corp has run a series of workshops on thinking big which it believes is crucial to business success.

The workshops revealed that it is important to set big goals and believe that they can be achieved. Setting goals that are too small will not stimulate the brain and could cause people to get bored and give up altogether. However, setting larger goals will motivate and inspire a person to keep going and gain a sense of achievement.

The firm is aware that sometimes even the most experienced business people can see big goals as overwhelming. However, Atlas Corp states that if handled correctly – by breaking the big goals into smaller chunks – they can be managed and can ultimately be inspiring for the individual.

Matt Stewart, of Atlas Corp, commented: "You can create confidence in yourself by spending time with other people who have achieved the goals you want."

Four more years for NIIT

NIIT, a provider of managed training services, has announced that its managed training services contract with a global pharmaceutical company headquartered in West London has been extended for four years.

The client is one of the world's largest science-led health-care companies. It researches and develops a broad range of products in the areas of pharmaceuticals, vaccines and consumer health care.

With this extension, NIIT's corporate-learning group will support a major learning and development transformation initiative by the client as a strategic partner. NIIT's services will focus on the company's strategic-transformation objectives of a centralized governance structure, improved delivery and business impact through curriculum optimization, vendor rationalization and overall reduction in third-party costs.

The initiative covers a large, multi-million-pound third-party training spend for over 100,000 employees, across six business units, in more than 80 countries.

Mott MacDonald moves into the cloud

Global engineering, management and development consultancy Mott MacDonald has selected performance, knowledge and learning-management systems provider NetDimensions to furnish its cloud-based learning-management system.

Mott MacDonald has been using NetDimensions for over ten years to train staff and external contractors worldwide. The company also manages employee induction through a dedicated portal.

“By using NetDimensions Learning, we are able to deliver the same training to our employees in different countries, with a local flavor. The system has strong multi-language handling features. We currently cater to 16 core languages. A real benefit for us is automation. We are able to deliver training to our staff that is relevant to their role in a timely manner, wherever they are in the world,” explained Peter Gomm, Mott MacDonald Group Learning-Technologies Manager.

He continued: “We provide our customers with in-depth knowledge and expertise. Our employees spend time on project sites, and might have to take on a supervisory role. This means that we need to make sure they understand and follow relevant health and safety regulations.”

Mott MacDonald is regularly audited internally and externally for quality and compliance. Internally, each department is responsible for reporting staff-compliance levels and putting a plan into action on how to remedy any incident of non-compliance.

In 2015, Mott MacDonald decided to implement a SaaS solution for its LMS. After rigorous evaluation, the company chose NetDimensions.

“Moving to SaaS will significantly reduce our administrative workload required to maintain the system internally. With SaaS, software upgrades are easy and quick as NetDimensions takes care of this process, allowing us to free up our internal resources,” concluded Peter Gomm.