

EMPLOYER Q & A

Martin Ackroyd
Commercial Director, Accu

Accu specialises in the development of hardware, screws, nuts and bolts for use in complex sub-assemblies. They are one of the UK's fastest-growing high-precision component suppliers.

Why does your company take on apprentices?

The current government's plans for investing in future generations by incentivising businesses to offer more apprenticeships really aligned with our goals of upskilling people from the local area. Bringing young people in early on in their careers really allows us to get them familiar with us as a business, our products and our processes.

One of the things that I really like is that we're also seeing a trend of families working together at Accu, from apprentices to managers, which is really nice to see and adds to the close-knit community feeling within our teams.

What are the benefits to your company of taking on apprentices?

One of the biggest benefits I've seen is that with them being a generation apart from us, it's really interesting to listen to and understand their perspective on things. Younger employees care about very different things and asking them questions about work and what they value keeps us current and helps us become a better, more inclusive and diverse company. As a business we form internal committees, from sports and social to company growth plans, so making sure that we include the apprentices in our decision making gives us a more balanced view on strategy and future goals.

Tell us about your apprentices from Kirklees College?

Nick has fitted in very well, it feels like he has been part of the team for a long time, he has shown on numerous times that he is a team player and shares the same work ethos as the Engineering Dept.

It's great having Ethan on Customer Satisfaction. We've already seen him coming out of his shell and it's been great for the whole team to have someone they can share all their knowledge and best practices with. We've also learnt a lot from Ethan, it's brilliant to have a fresh pair of eyes to challenge our day to day processes.

We are very pleased with Lily's performance so far, it's great to see how confident and knowledgeable she's become around our systems and products. She works great with our team but also with other teams around the business

What does the future hold for your apprentices at the company once they have completed their course?

We see the apprentices we take on really being able to add long term value to the business, helping us to develop a multi-generational team of professionals across all departments.

How does the college support your company and your apprentice?

We have had a few video calls with various people and we have had our first call with Tania a couple of weeks back to check on Nick's progress, this will be monthly either with Tania or a member of her team. This has helped us shape Nick's workload so that they align with his Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour targets.

We initially worked with Nichola to bring Ethan on board and have recently had video catch-ups with Marie. These have been really helpful for me to know exactly what is expected of Ethan, as well as Accu. We're going to have catch-ups with Marie each term to check on progress and answer any questions. It's a great support for both of us!

We have monthly catchups with Lily's mentor Jane. It is great to get feedback on her work at college but also gives her manager an opportunity to see how I can support her.

Would you take on more apprentices in the future, and why?

From a personal perspective it would be great for Accu to build a reputation of providing the best apprenticeship opportunities in the local area. We will continue to do this every year, giving people the same opportunities that we had.



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