



Investment IN THE FUTURE

Torque spoke to fastener companies offering apprenticeships – and to an apprentice in the industrial sector – for their views on the valuable contribution these schemes can make...

Apprenticeships have been around since the middle ages, but recently – in the UK at least – have become a political hot topic, with the ‘Apprenticeship levy’ actually cutting the number of workers starting apprenticeships in England – the opposite of the intended effect.

Despite recent controversies, the apprenticeship sector is chock full of success stories in industry, both in the UK and abroad, and not least in the fastener sector:

And that’s not to mention the tools sector - Makita UK told *Torque* that it is already in talks with local colleges and hopes to have an apprenticeship scheme set up in the not so distant future.

In the meantime, read on for the views of some key fastener companies in the UK and Germany for their take on apprenticeships and also for the view from an apprentice and member of the IAC (Industry Apprentice Council).



GESIPA UK

Diana Scholefield, Managing Director

"Last year we took on three apprentices. We've got one in our customer service department, one in our maintenance department and one in our tooling business unit/equipment department. It gets young people into the business and it has worked really well for us.

"We are involved with the local college, which has an Industrial Centre of Excellence for Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering. I'm on the board with other local employers and we steer the College on what skills we want from new people. We run open days locally for young people and also for their parents to come and see what engineering is like, because there's a very old fashioned view of engineering.

"We open up for a couple of hours, so youngsters can come down with their parents and we give them a tour around - other employers in the area do it as well. And then we hosted Women in Engineering Day in 2017 and in April this year. Again, that's in line with the college and some of the other local businesses where they set up engineering workshops. Local schools bring girls in over the afternoon and then at tea time we open up the factory for them to come with the parents to have a look around.

"So, we're very engaged in getting young people interested in engineering and I'm quite passionate about that, as are a lot of people here. We do what we can to get people involved."



ENGINEERING PERCEPTION

"The key [to changing the perception of engineering] is getting the parents' view to change. And we need to get young people at a young age into the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, choosing them at school to drive them in that way.

"One of our issues here is that Keighley isn't the centre of the engineering world. When you get graduates they've come and done a great job but then moved on to other positions in Birmingham and the Midlands so we are trying a different route now.

"We do actively promote the recruitment of women. I started in engineering and I've had fantastic opportunities and I want people to see what opportunities are available. But it is very difficult, you've got to break down these barriers that there are." →