



...PROOF THAT TRAINING PAYS

Essex Services Group plc believes in opportunity for all, even before they join the workforce. Ray Harwood, Safety, Health & Environment Manager, explains how they're winning work as a result...

This is what we do...

Our people are our greatest asset and we're proud of the employees who make up our team. Because of this, we're fully committed to developing the skills and career progression of everyone, from those working on the tools to director level.

To find the best new entrants, we work with local schools on workplace experience placements for students who are interested in a career in the built environment. At present we have 14 apprentices who specialise in either electrical or mechanical services engineering disciplines.

On top of this, the organisation supports higher level qualifications such as diplomas and degrees, with five staff currently attending university. We also sponsor half a dozen adult trainees who are training at further education colleges.

Underpinning all of this activity is health, safety and compliance training for everyone from directors to managers. Keeping staff fully up to speed in this area is of upmost importance, so much so that we commit to higher level safety courses in addition to the minimum requirements.



Training works for us. Here's why...

We have gained business because of our training programmes, so our efforts definitely pay off. In pre-qualifying documents and compliance audits we can clearly define what sets us apart from competitors. With such a strong training culture we can ensure continuity so that delivery is never compromised.

Our staff turnover is less than 5% and we have no problem in recruiting new employees to boost our headcount. We believe our work experience programmes play a big part in this – allowing people to spend time with you before they leave school means they make a more informed career choice. This reduces drop-outs at apprenticeship level which in turn saves time and money.

The case in point

We're constantly trying to be better, and have developed a set of guiding principles for the company which encourage people to be more aware of what we're trying to achieve. The staff get behind it and the enthusiasm is wonderful:

- Make safety personal
- Lead by example
- Work as a team
- Find a better way
- Deliver our promise, aim to exceed
- Communication is paramount to success
- Never a problem, always a solution

Our advice to others...

Many people are worried about site safety for school work placements. We believe they need to be supervised by a competent person but it's no different to a 16 year old joining the site for the first day as an apprentice. If the site isn't safe for a 15 year old, it's not safe for any of your staff.

The more professional your workforce, the better they'll do the job avoiding pitfalls along the way. If they've got the right knowledge they'll spot situations arising and take steps to mitigate that risk, rather than acting once something has gone wrong.



What a Good Day means to us...

Everyone turning up on time ready to do their best. And at the end of the day everything has gone well, with all problems overcome, so everyone goes home safely and proud of the job they have done.

*Good Day is brought to you by SummitSkills, the Sector Skills Council for building services engineering, helping you to develop the skills of your employees, making you and your business better equipped to succeed.