



...PROOF THAT TRAINING PAYS

Nigel Overthrow, Managing Director of Convections explains how his commitment to apprenticeship training provides him with home-grown skills and the benefits it brings...

This is what we do...

We work in the domestic and light commercial plumbing industry and have a strong belief in recruiting and training apprentices. I'd been in the plumbing industry for 26 years, but as my workload increased I found the company had to expand – the best way I felt I could do this was to take on an apprentice, and the business has grown from there.

At present, from our six employees, one has recently finished his apprenticeship training and two are just starting their Level 3 apprenticeship at college.

Due to the nature of our business we have to constantly retrain to keep our skills as current as possible. So in addition to apprenticeship training we make sure we're fully up to date in areas such as water regulations and unvented systems. We also take advantage of manufacturer and technical training, because if a new product comes out I want to ensure the company is using it to its upmost capacity, allowing us to pass the full benefits of that product back to the client.



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

With the complexity of work that's in our industry, we need intelligent people. If your workforce is not educated correctly it will not be able to do the job properly.

Through our training we have a fully skilled workforce who not only are up to date with changes in the industry, but have the confidence to carry out their work to the standard required in today's world.

For us, recruiting apprentices does not just bring cost benefits, it provides a blank canvas from which you can create an employee who is trained in your way of working. This is not just in areas such as technical and practical skills, but also when it comes to developing good people skills and customer relationships.

The case in point

In addition to ensuring all my staff are fully skilled, on a personal level I chose to become a registered Engineering Technician through the Chartered Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering to reflect the qualifications and experience I've gained over the years.

I see this as a process of lifelong learning to continually further my understanding. It's the old adage – you've got to practice what you preach – if you insist that your staff are trained you need to ensure that you're also up to speed. You've got to be as qualified as you can possibly be.

Our advice to others...

Training and developing apprentices into fully qualified members of staff will give small companies a far better workforce with less chance of things going wrong.

It's sometimes easy to use subcontractors if workloads are high, but that's just a quick fix. If the job they do is not up to your standard, your reputation is at risk. With apprenticeships, such mistakes and errors are eradicated. The payback is a fully skilled operative who is trained to meet your business needs – within a year they are working completely on their own and are productive.



Photography courtesy of JTL



What a Good Day means to us...

The emphasis for us is on a trained, educated and happy workforce that is safe in both the way they work and the environment in which they work.

*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.