

ETITO TRAINING UPDATE

SHARING APPRENTICES – GOOD FOR THE INDUSTRY, AND GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

CONSIDERING TAKING ON AN APPRENTICE BUT NOT SURE IF YOU'VE GOT THE DIVERSITY OF WORK NEEDED FOR THE ENTIRE APPRENTICESHIP? THIS WAS EXACTLY THE PREDICAMENT THAT GEOFF CLARK, AIR NEW ZEALAND CALIBRATION PRODUCTION LEADER AT CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT FOUND HIMSELF IN. **FORTUNATELY APPRENTICE SHARING PROVIDED A SOLUTION.**

Charged with calibrating the test equipment used in aircraft maintenance, there's no doubt the work of Geoff and his team is highly specialised – and in order to get the skilled staff they require, they need to invest in training. That's why they chose to employ an apprentice. However, after employing David Fletcher, the Calibration Services Department's first ever apprentice, they soon came across a problem. Their specialised workload meant they were unable to deliver all of the unit standards that made up the National Certificate in Industrial Measurement and Control [Level 4] that David was working towards.

The solution was a series of secondments with another company, an arrangement Geoff says was great for them. "This way David could cover those unit standards we're unable to deliver, and catch-up on workplace assessments – which were difficult for us to complete as we didn't have a resident workplace assessor.

Geoff adds that there are other less obvious advantages to this kind of arrangement. "Sharing an apprentice was a first for Air New Zealand," says Geoff. "And it means we've established a relationship with another company we might not have had otherwise. Now we're looking forward to returning the favour with one of their apprentices in future." For Geoff, the key to success with this kind of arrangement is clear communication from both parties. "Ours was an informal arrangement," he says. "But if you can strike up a good relationship and have a clear understanding about what each party expects from the situation you can't go wrong."

Paul Hollings, ETITO Industry Training Manager – Electrotechnology and Telecommunications, is quick to point out that while in the past apprentice sharing arrangements have generally been born from a lack of the scope of work needed to cover all the unit standards



Geoff Clark and apprentice David Fletcher.

in an apprenticeship, in the current economic climate they're ideal for companies who are facing a drop in work. "Some electrical companies are eager to retain their apprentices, but their focus is on their bottom-line, which is understandable. Apprentice sharing enables industry to come together for a common goal – to train our next generation of tradespeople, which is great," says Paul. "It's about maintaining the industry's training levels so that enough qualified people are available for when we emerge from the current economic downturn." Paul adds, "ETITO's training managers have a wide range of industry relationships, and can help employers establish apprentice sharing arrangements if they need a hand."

If you'd like to find out how an apprentice sharing or secondment arrangement can work for your business, contact your ETITO training manager.

IT'S AN EMPLOYER'S MARKET – SO USE IT!

A job market that's currently tipped in the employer's favour has inspired Matthew Bell from M B Electrical in Clevedon to make sure he finds the highest quality apprentices he can. With four apprentices only months away from becoming qualified, Matthew's looking to take on another two! And he's developed a process to help him find the best.

"I interview as many candidates as I can, and I get them to do a short written test that covers English, maths and a bit of common-sense," says Matthew who's adamant that intelligence is a highly valued trait among his apprentices. "They didn't have to excel at school but I want them to be smart. They say NCEA Level 1 is the minimum for an apprentice, but to me that's the bare minimum."

When he has a handful of ideal candidates Matthew gives them a trial period. "I take them on for about three weeks and pair each of them with a different tradesperson." At the end of every week he switches them around.

"Then I let my team decide who we should take on, after all – they're the ones who'll be working with them."

With a company culture that takes pride in giving apprentices responsibility for areas outside their apprenticeship [such as office administration] it's evident that at M B Electrical there's a real commitment to training. "It raises the skill level of your tradespeople as well as the apprentice, as they're teaching and interacting with each other. And, I've found that young minds work well and can be a real asset to the business."

For more tips on recruiting right, contact your ETITO training manager.



Matthew Bell from M B Electrical.

WHO IS ETITO?

ETITO is the industry training organisation for seven industries, including electrotechnology. Recognised by industry and government as your national standards setting body, ETITO designs national qualifications; develops and manages training and assessment programmes; and provides government training subsidies to lower the cost of training apprentices.

ETITO's national training manager network provides invaluable advice and support to apprentices and employers where it's needed most – out in the field. Whether it's helping you fill out a Training Agreement, sorting out any concerns you may have about your apprentice or ensuring the Workplace Logbook is filled out correctly, our training managers support both apprentices and employers throughout every stage of the apprenticeship programme.

Our dedicated customer service administrators provide a wide range of advice and office-based support for both apprentice and employer – from registering Training Agreements and arranging off-job training courses to sending out progress reports and registering credits with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA].

To find out more about ETITO visit www.etito.co.nz

ETITO TRAINING MANAGERS

Terry Kidd – North Shore and Northland
Ph: 09 583 1338 Mob: 027 461 8384

Brett Piskulic – Central and West Auckland
Ph: 09 583 1344 Mob: 027 461 8287

Bob Thomas – Hamilton
Ph: 07 839 7395 Mob: 027 489 0981

Paul Mitchell – Rotorua
Ph: 07 349 3461 Mob: 027 280 5243

Paul Craven – Wellington
Ph: 04 499 7677 Mob: 027 466 2402

Marty Matheson – Christchurch
Ph: 03 365 9252 Mob: 027 461 7018

Mike Grinder – Dunedin
Ph: 03 479 2978 Mob: 027 239 2711



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