



TRAINEESHIPS

An employer's perspective

Arming young people with essential tools and experience required for the workplace is vital both to fulfil individual career aspirations and meet the needs of demanding employers.

19 year old Alex Foster has made significant steps in this regard thanks to a 12-week work placement with Kent-based Levicks Chartered Accountants, organised as part of the Step2Work scheme run by OCR in conjunction with the Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO).

Alex was placed with Levicks with the assistance of local vocational training organisation, Profile Development and Training Ltd which has a long established relationship with OCR and is a member of KATO.

The traineeship opportunity taken up by Alex has delivered real benefit for all parties as Mark Hurdman, Partner at Levicks Chartered Accountants outlines: "We were approached by Profile to partake in the traineeship scheme and after interviewing a number of candidates, we selected Alex to join us for a three month period. We take such decisions seriously as it does involve time commitment from our busy staff, but the regular and on-going dialogue with the trainee tutor at Profile meant we shaped the 12 week period to ensure it helped Alex, as well as providing value for our business."

Taking someone who has not encountered the demands and expectations of an office-based working environment and exposing them to such a new workplace experience was an important element of the placement to Levicks, as Mark explains: "We exposed Alex to a wide cross section of activity to ensure he experienced true office life. This ranged from making teas and coffees to using the photocopier, as well as working with our internal computer systems. But, we also ensured that he was able to see the work that goes into how we produce a set of accounts and the general services we provide to our valued clients, which range from large corporates through to smaller-sized Owner Managed Businesses."

"On a practical basis, it was also welcome to see how, for example, his maths and computing skills improved through his time with us, thanks to the varied experience we provided."

Whilst the practical and technical world of accountancy was covered during the placement, the concurrent development of Alex's workplace skills was also an area of key focus. In particular, emphasis was given to help further develop Alex's all round communication skills and boost his overall confidence. This was improved through his daily exposure to fellow work colleagues and senior partners at the firm, as well as using the telephone. Addressing his communication skills was tackled in tandem with imparting the importance of smart presentation and appropriate behaviour in the workplace – skills that will remain essential for Alex in his future career.

Mark summarises the impact of Alex Foster's placement at his firm:

"I would thoroughly recommend this traineeship work placement programme via Profile Development and Training. The close collaboration and weekly communication with the trainee tutor helped ensure the individual would get what they need from the placement and this is critical to its success."

"It is fair to say that the employer does have a time commitment to the process, but the results are very encouraging. We are delighted to have played a part in bolstering Alex's confidence, improving his knowledge about workplace expectations, enhancing his practical and technical skills and exposing him to the workings of a busy accountancy practice. The experience will hopefully help him immensely as he develops his future career."

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