

MYTH BUSTING

APPRENTICESHIPS



1. Bringing in new talent and driving long term diversity in the workforce.

2021's National Apprenticeship Week celebrated those organisations and apprentices that are 'finding their futures' in line with this year's campaign theme.

The fact is that despite over 1.5 million companies paying into the apprenticeship levy every month, there is still far too much confusion over apprenticeships – who they are for, what value they add to an employer.

A common misconception is that apprenticeships are for those who don't do well at school, are 16 or 17 years old or for those who wish to work in manual trades (plumbing, electricians etc.) Our own experience of delivering apprenticeship programmes as well as upskilling our own staff tells us this isn't the case. A level 7 apprenticeship is, in fact, equivalent to a Master's and a great deal of companies are choosing to spend their levy fund on upskilling their own staff.

Some organisations see apprenticeships as purely a recruitment issue; when in fact used effectively, they can be a company's solution to CSR issues, retention, diversity and community engagement.

Step22 is the brand new hospitality brand within Catch22 Apprenticeships, meaning we have access to all the systems, resources and skills that make Catch22 an award-winning apprenticeship provider with more than 10 years experience.

Apprenticeships are an effective and viable career pathway for people of all ages; they are supportive and run at a pace that suits the learner and the business alike. At Step22, we know what we're talking about: last year we supported 984 apprentices, working with levy and non-levy paying organisations like Compass Group, the AA, Rendall and Rittner and Vodafone.

We tailor our apprenticeship programmes to suit the needs of the business we work with.

And so to break down some of this confusion, we conducted research, asking over 100 companies about their experiences and views of recruiting and retaining apprentices. With this short report, we aim to demystify some misconceptions around apprenticeships and share some of the wide-ranging benefits both employers and apprentices alike have reported.



Chris Stoker-Jones
Director of Vocational Training, Catch22

MYTH:

Apprenticeships bring in low quality talent that can't get a full time job elsewhere.

A diverse workforce is a high performing workforce. The government campaign #SeePotential reports that **businesses who recruit from diverse backgrounds have higher staff retention rates, lower absenteeism, boost their corporate reputation and solve skills shortages.** A diverse workforce means development of leaders and decision-makers from a range of backgrounds and experiences. Despite this, just half (43%) of the companies we surveyed understood that apprenticeships are a good way to bring in fresh, new talent.

But many of the organisations we spoke to aren't taking the steps they could be to increase their diversity. **Just 23% of companies say they are focusing on increasing diversity in race and ethnicity and 22% are looking to diversify their educational levels.** Further areas companies said they were looking to diversify in include gender (15%), individuals with a disability (15%) and economic status (13%).

FACT:

Apprenticeships are a good way to bring in fresh, new talent from diverse backgrounds. The best organisations recruit for attitudes and train for skills!

Just half (58%) of companies have put in practices to ensure they have the strongest workforce, with a quarter (27%) ensuring their staff are welcoming to individuals from all backgrounds, and 18% consciously removing bias in the recruitment process. **Our Good Employer Guide sets out how businesses can promote inclusive recruitment processes and build a diverse workforce.**





THE AA:

The AA works hard to ensure diversity in its workforce; diversity of talent, of thought, of background and of education.

“Apprenticeships are a great way to bring in new emerging talent into our organisation. The AA have reaped the benefit of this and there are some absolute stars that have come through the Apprenticeship route.” The AA.

Matthew Smith is an apprentice at the AA: “I was an air cadet for a year during which time I learned discipline and teamwork, we went on expeditions to RAF bases and I completed my weapons training there. I also have achieved a level 3 in Music technology which is a hobby that I enjoy.”

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

HSC PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:

Yasemin is a Housing and Property Management apprentice at HSC, blazing a trail as the youngest Property Manager in in the team. She was a finalist at the Asian Apprenticeship Awards 2018:

“As the youngest property manager at HSC, I feel that my ideas and views on various matters are often different to that of my colleagues. Whilst I am young, I have joined HSC with experience from three big property management companies in addition to the knowledge gained from my housing apprenticeship. I feel that the fresh outlook I give benefits my organisation.”

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE BELOW PRACTICES HAS YOUR ORGANISATION PUT IN PLACE TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE STRONGEST WORKFORCE?

Consciously removing bias in the recruitment process	18%
Creating pre-employment programmes that prepare individuals for work	10%
We've adjusted our induction and management style to give employees supported entry in to work	14%
Ensuring our staff are welcoming to individuals from all backgrounds	27%
We don't actively put programmes in place to hire a wider mix of individuals	13%
None of the above	13%

2. Developing your existing workforce.

MYTH:

Apprenticeships are only for those at the start of their career, in low paying and low skilled jobs.

Despite relevant qualifications being seen as more valuable than relevant work experience, almost seven in ten (69%) agree that real life work experience is better for their business than book learning.

Apprentices of all ages and in all disciplines are taking the decision to learn and earn on the job, improving their skills, confidence and experience. Employers who are embracing these opportunities, tailoring the programmes to their own business needs and opening their recruitment up to a new and diverse workforce, are reaping the benefits as well as giving the next generation opportunities to blaze a trail themselves.

FACT:

Apprenticeships are a cost-effective way to train staff at all levels across your organisation. Many companies use apprenticeships to invest in their management, driving quality and effective leadership.



Here at Catch22, two of our rising stars have achieved their Level 5 Operational Manager Apprenticeship and are now excelling in their roles.

Richard Smith is Regional Manager within our College Hub:

“This apprenticeship has transformed the way I lead my team – the underpinning models and techniques I have learnt have given me the confidence to make the right decisions and lead the team in a structured, measured way. The support I have received from my tutor and the wider organisation has been phenomenal. I would recommend this course to aspiring senior leaders without question”

Manjeeta Sunnar is Head of Service for Victims First within our Justice Hub:

“Being on this course has been an incredible journey. I have been able to learn about many different techniques and tools that I can apply to my role and pass on to my team. All whilst learning about myself too. The training has helped build my confidence in leading my team. The support from my trainer has been brilliant throughout.”

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

3. Train talent from the ground up.

MYTH:

Apprentices learn from their apprenticeship training provider, and will only deliver in a certain way.

But this message isn't yet understood by businesses. Just 40% of businesses surveyed agree that apprenticeships are beneficial to train people the way they want to. This is particularly useful when it comes to filling skills gaps within an organisation. **90% of apprentices stay in employment after their training ends – 67% with the same employer.**

73% of the companies we surveyed said that 'attitude' was the most valued quality in a potential recruit, with having a university degree and relevant work experience ranking the least important qualities.

ACCORDING TO OUR RESEARCH, THE MOST VALUED SKILLS WHEN HIRING ARE:

- Attitude (73%)
- Potential (56%)
- Relevant qualifications (31%)
- Values (30%)
- Relevant work experience (27%)
- University degree (8%)

FACT:

Apprenticeships help organisations find fresh talent, who can then be steeped in your organisation's culture and way of delivery. Apprentices are far more likely to stay with your organisation for the long term.



HML:

"We quickly identify those apprentices that have talent and a future in our organisation. Many come in with a sound working ethic, work hard and show us they have some 'spark'. We have ended up retaining over 95% of the apprentices that we have recruited and they are now developing and progressing through our organisation."

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

VODAFONE:

At Vodafone, they see the benefit of working with apprentices to embrace their organisational culture. As a result, **apprentices feel a part of the company's mission and bigger picture.** They see a future for themselves at the organisation and a valued member of the team:

Holly is an apprentice at Vodafone in the Customer Service department:

"I have contributed to Vodafone achieving their overall business objectives by making sure all the customer issues are resolved and if a problem is out of my remit, I escalate it and get this resolved for them."

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

CATCH22:

Renata is completing a Business Administration apprenticeship in our Apprenticeships team. **She is committed to Catch22's values and mission and feels that these play a large part in her development, both personally and professionally:**

"From the first day I felt fully supported, understood and surrounded by great, caring people. Being part of this organisation makes me truly feel that I can go a long way, not only working towards my own self development and building a lifetime career but working towards something much bigger; helping people in need from cradle to career."

Gary Tarbuck is Renata's manager and, having started as an apprentice himself at Catch22, knows all too well that when an apprentice is supported to learn and develop, they can put down firm roots in an organisation:

"Starting at Catch22 myself as apprentice over 10 years ago I know what it takes from a manager to support them and what they bring to a business. They bring enthusiasm, freshness, new ideas, willingness to learn, they ask loads of questions and just have a real desire to learn new skills on a daily basis. When we hire apprentices we don't just see them as short term; they should be the foundation of our long term workforce and I see Renata moving up the ladder with us in the near future."

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

4. Corporate Responsibility - How apprenticeships can give you a commercial edge with customers

MYTH:

Apprenticeships are just a recruitment tool.

Many businesses are waking up to the fact that doing good, is good business. **As consumers become more thoughtful about how and where they spend their money, they are increasingly seeking out the organisations which can prove that they are good corporate citizens**, improving the life chances of those around them.

FACT:

Apprenticeships can form a key part of your corporate social responsibility or social mobility strategy.

Of the companies we surveyed, just a fifth (18%) say being a responsible corporate citizen is not important to their organisation, and three in ten (31%) said that being a responsible citizen is not a business priority. Over three quarters (77%) mention that they are currently following practices deemed as responsible. 37% of organisations have links with a local school or charity (37%), and a third (34%) actively volunteer or fundraise within their community. But there is a more strategic way to support the local area, 38% of corporates understand that taking on apprentices from different backgrounds is a good way to invest in the community around a business.

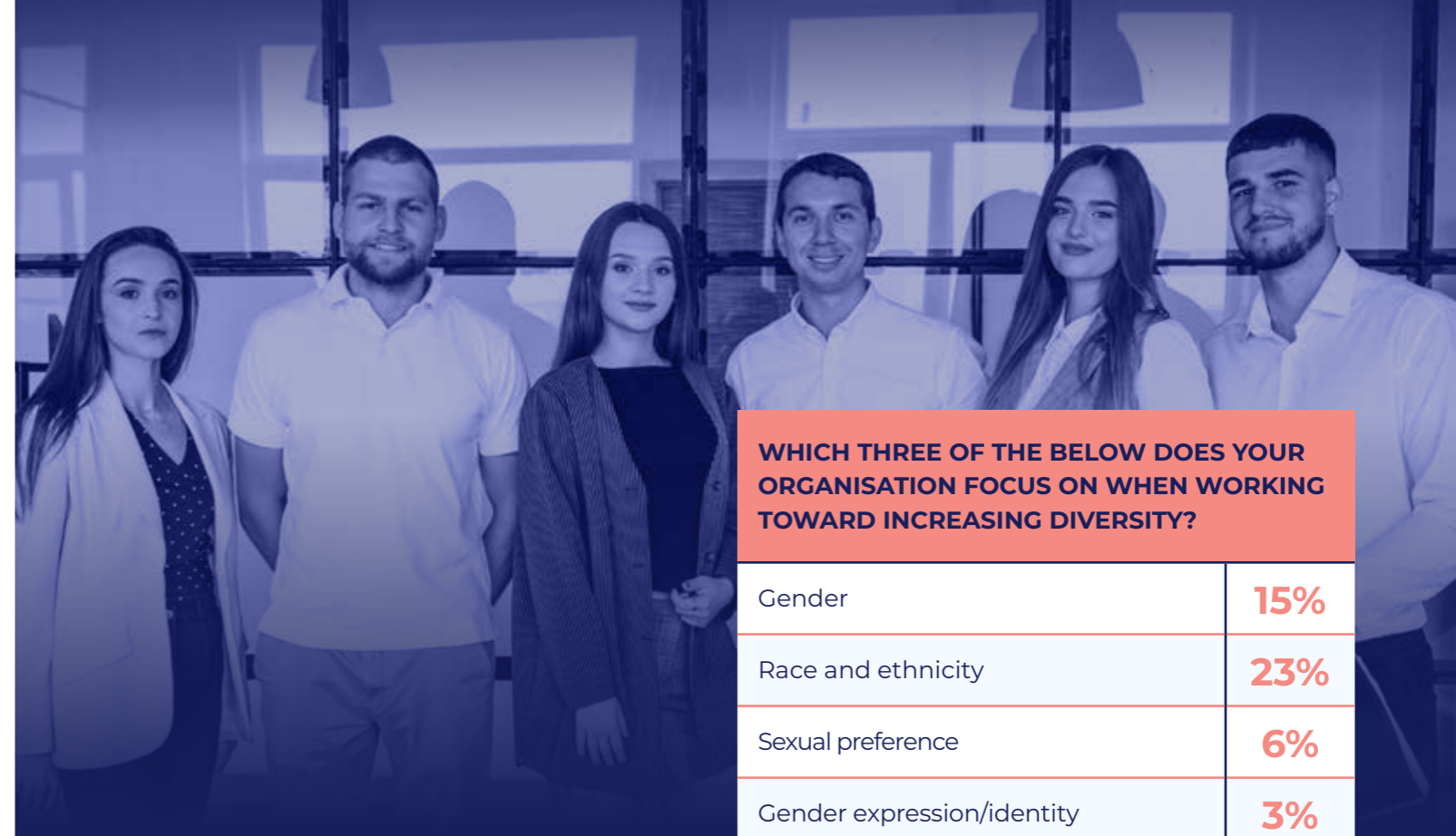
We at Catch22 work with people who are furthest from the job market. Care leavers, people with convictions, those with disabilities – both psychological and physical, single parents and looked after young people all face additional barriers to work based on complex personal contexts. **We know that focusing on the potential of apprentices, rather than their barriers, will not only benefit your talent pool but also your bottom line.**

HML:

HML, the property and estate management firm, view apprenticeships as part of their social mobility strategy, but do not limit the value apprentices bring to just ticking the corporate social responsibility box. **Apprentices bring original ideas and a new way of looking at things:**

“We see apprenticeships as a key part of our overall recruitment and social mobility strategy. We passionately believe that as a large employer we have a responsibility to the next generation of workers. **They are key to helping us keep our business relevant and innovative. Fresh generation brings us a fresh set of ideas!** This helps us innovate and remain relevant. Our customer base evolves over time too and our apprentices help us shape our service offering to their particular generation.”

FINDING THEIR FUTURES



WHICH THREE OF THE BELOW DOES YOUR ORGANISATION FOCUS ON WHEN WORKING TOWARD INCREASING DIVERSITY?

Gender	15%
Race and ethnicity	23%
Sexual preference	6%
Gender expression/identity	3%
Educational needs	22%
Economic status	13%
Individuals who have been in the care system	2%
Ex-offenders	5%
Individuals with a disability	15%
Other	3%

VODAFONE:

“Working with Catch22 to deliver our Customer Service apprenticeship has enabled us to drive diverse talent with fresh thinking into the business, whilst shaping them to embrace our organisational culture. Catch22 provide constant support to both the apprentices and organisation and are producing top talent apprentices.”

FINDING THEIR FUTURES

