



Apprentice Ambassadors Q&A





Rhys Goulden

Junior Engineer/Purchasing Controller, aged 25

“Employment, wage, life – sorted!”

How old were you when you started your apprenticeship and what were you doing prior to it?

I started my apprenticeship as an 19 year old, prior to that was at school, after that, I did my Level 3 at Newcastle College.

Why did you want to get involved in manufacturing?

In the North East, manufacturing, particularly automotive manufacturing, is a global industry and it's very important to Sunderland. It's the place I wanted to work and the career I wanted to have.

What made Unipres stand out against other manufacturers?

Unipres is a big company in the North East – back when I was 14 I did my work experience here and learned about what the company was all about and how it supplied Nissan and from then on it was always the place I wanted to work.

Can you tell us what your typical work day at Unipres involves?

On a typical day, I will be on the shop floor, looking for how things can be improved. It's about minimising input for maximum output, so I'm looking at material usage and thinking about how we can reduce waste, improve parts per minute and generally improving processes.

What skills have you learned since joining the company?

I'm a qualified toolmaker for all the tools that we use at Unipres, so I can make them, in the past five years I've achieved all my vocational skills, now I'm doing the degree apprenticeship at Sunderland University for the next two years.

What has been your proudest career moment so far?

Completing my apprenticeship – a five-year commitment and I came out with a national certificate. I was also runner-up in Apprentice of the Year 2018, which was a really proud moment.



And what are your plans for the next five years?

I like what I'm doing in the Purchasing department and still being able to make use of my engineering skills. I'll also be achieving my degree and I'd like to work up towards becoming a senior supervisor.

What would you say to someone considering taking up a manufacturing apprenticeship?

Go for it – it's what set me on the path to a good job, a good wage, qualifications that will only help my future career, and it's meant I've been able to buy my house, my car...my life essentials.

Also, what more do you think the manufacturing community can do to reach out to and appeal to young people?

I think the way Unipres manages its Industrial Cadets programme is important, working with youngsters as they're making decisions about their futures. The Primary Engineer helps showcase even younger kids to understand what manufacturing is all about and get them excited about the sector.

How has your apprenticeship helped you grow as a person?

Professionally, it has given me a trade that I will have forever, a good career, steady income and also a wealth of vocational skills.

Personally, it has given me confidence and learn responsibility.

Finally, if you could sum up your time at Unipres so far in one word, what would it be?

Success – I've done my five-year apprenticeship, have a full time job, earn a good living, and I'm now doing my degree. Employment, wage, life – sorted!





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