

CHRISTIE: RECEPTIONIST AND ADMINISTRATOR



I completed a Business Administration Apprenticeship whilst working in the role of a Receptionist and Administrator. I had completed my GCSEs and 'A'-Levels and felt I really wanted a different way of learning and the experience of working. An Apprenticeship was perfect as it's a way of learning through real-life experience in the workplace; I really enjoyed the challenge of juggling work with learning.

When you're an Apprentice, you have the opportunity to learn from the best – all of the other people around you in the workplace who are professional in their jobs. You learn how to be business-like, you meet people and you learn from your company and the work they do. You also get paid because you're in employment.

Older people shouldn't be intimidated – Apprenticeships are not just for younger people.

I found my Apprenticeship job by visiting my local Training Providers and Colleges. Through registering my interest with them, I received a call to ask me to go for a job interview - I went for an informal interview first and was then invited back for a second formal interview and was successful in getting the job.

Look on www.Apprenticeships.org.uk. Looking on the internet to find out more is my biggest recommendation.

My tips for people interested in Apprenticeships are to make sure you chose an area you're interested in and make sure you choose a good employer - somewhere you can settle into. It's not just about the money you earn; it's also

about the experience you get. You need to be motivated because you're working and you study; you need a hard-working attitude, an employer is not under any obligation to keep you on after you complete your Apprenticeship so you need to be willing to prove yourself.

Through my Apprenticeship, I've been presented with loads of opportunities. I started off as a Receptionist and have been promoted to the position of PA to the Company Director, a job which came with a pay increase and a company car - all within 18 months! I've taken on more responsibility and I'm now out speaking to clients and seeing more of the business. Doing an Apprenticeship has given me more confidence and has taken me into a long-term career in something I enjoy.

Through doing an Apprenticeship you 'find yourself' – you gain confidence and get to know what you want to do in your career path. You get so much out of it.

DAVINA: YOUTH WORKER



I've completed a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Business Administration and am now doing my Level 3 Apprenticeship in Advanced Youth Work. An Apprenticeship is a fun way of learning what you need to learn without feeling like you're at school, you earn money while you learn, plus you get a real sense of ownership because you're getting paid.

I did my GCSEs and then went to College but didn't feel I was academically able to go to University. The cost of University scared me and I felt my only option was to get a job - an Apprenticeship seemed less threatening and more appealing than going to University.

Apprenticeships give you experience and a foot in the door. Employers look for experience and Apprenticeships give you this. I genuinely feel it's the best way to go – you've got more chance of getting somewhere. If I can do it, then you can do it!

An Apprenticeship allows you to make friends in an organisation and show them what you're capable of. When you do this it makes them want to keep you on.

If you're interested in Apprenticeships, look it up on the internet, just search for "Apprenticeships + your location". You can also go to your local Training Provider or College to find out full details. Remember that youth workers should be able to point you in the right direction too.

Since starting my Apprenticeship, I've had loads of opportunities, I've set-up and manage my own youth work project and I've done my FA Level 1 Football Coaching award, my Community Sports Leaders Award and I'm currently doing my FA Level 2 Football Coaching and FA Level 7 Refereeing Awards.

For the future, my Apprenticeship is going to allow me to continue to develop myself up to Manager and then Director level and I'll train others in the skills I've got.

You get a massive sense of achievement from doing an Apprenticeship because you achieve it without a teacher standing over you. You understand the consequences and effects you have on other people when you're doing your work. You're in control of your own future. It is the BEST way to get experience.

An Apprenticeship helps you take control of your own life - it's your decision, your choice; you are the one who is in control. You're not forced to do it – it's using your own initiative to say 'this is my future'.

ELLIOT: MARKETING ASSISTANT



I'm a Marketing Assistant at a specialist global internet marketing company; I've now completed a Level 3 Apprenticeship in Marketing. I found my job on www.Apprenticeships.org.uk - I wasn't aware of this website initially but I did my own research to find out more. I applied for a job, went for two interviews and then I was offered the position!

I had 12 GCSEs and had completed my first year of 'A'-Levels but I then chose to do an Apprenticeship because I liked the idea of having a combination of work experience and education at the same time. An Apprenticeship is a qualification and a great way to gain work experience which is what employers are looking for. I was not totally comfortable with full-time work or full-time University, so an Apprenticeship was the perfect middle ground.

Use the website – www.Apprenticeships.org.uk. Complete your profile on the site as this makes it easy to apply for jobs because your profile is already set-up and ready to go – it's a 'one-click' approach to apply for a job.

I received excellent support from my employer, from my Training Provider and from the Chartered Institute of Marketing. At College I had a mentor, tutor and lecturer who were all really supportive with my work role and my personal life. I was able to be involved in projects in the workplace that evidenced my qualification and learning. Through doing an Apprenticeship, my job has evolved and I am doing activities that I really enjoy; I'm focussed and have the opportunity to grow and progress within my company.

If I went to University, I feel I would be in debt. My Apprenticeship has allowed me to earn, take control of my own life and have my own independence.

If you want to do an Apprenticeship, use the website at www.Apprenticeships.org.uk or go to a Training Provider or College. You have to have the motivation to do it and do it for the right reasons. Young people sometimes don't realise how formal it is in business - how to behave in the workplace, how you are monitored, the business processes and the rules and regulations. You have to keep at it, learn and fit in.

People can see University as being a higher level, but Apprenticeships are a qualification path that can lead on to higher level qualifications than degrees. There's a great qualification path in place with Apprenticeships.

HAYLEY: BEAUTY THERAPIST



I got 5 GCSEs at school and I've now completed Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeships in Beauty Therapy. I've always loved being in work and have had jobs since I was 14 years old. I never particularly liked being in the classroom so an Apprenticeship was the perfect choice as you're working, gaining industry experience, learning and getting qualified all at the same time. An Apprenticeship also gives you independence because you have a job and you're earning.

The experience you gain in industry means you learn a wide set of skills because you have a range of work colleagues who you can learn from. You might start off at the bottom, but you learn, progress and can be proud of your achievements. When you complete your Apprenticeship, you are more employable as you have the experience of industry – you have spoken to real clients and have real knowledge and experience.

If you're willing to work, an Apprenticeship is an excellent option – you see and experience industry first-hand. You must have an interest and a passion for your industry. When you start you may not be on a high wage but you get qualifications and experience and you can progress.

If you're interested in Apprenticeships, my advice would be to choose the general trade/area you are interested in first - you will find that there are loads of different types of roles within broad trade areas.

Some people don't think that Apprenticeships are worth it; they say what's the point in it, it's for the less able students so if you're not going to University, it's just a menial skill to learn. IT'S NOT!

Apprenticeships show just how skilled workers can be! You can go far! Skills shape our world – if you don't have skills, you can't operate. Doing an Apprenticeship is an option that's a career, a qualification and it's about learning on the job, first-hand which is the best and quickest way to learn.

Your local Training Provider or College will always have all the information you need to know, they will also have details about job vacancies, so I would highly recommend going and talking to them. You should also contact employers and go in to visit them with your CV.

Through doing my Apprenticeships, I've had loads of opportunities. I've done extra courses, been to trade shows where I've gained more industry knowledge and have heard expert speakers from different areas of the industry. I also entered College, Regional and UK competitions and entered the World Skills competition

which took place in London where I won a Medallion of Excellence. The World Skills competition is often referred to as The Skills Olympics – the skills that Apprentices have are phenomenal – these Apprentices came from 50 different countries around the world, they're the most skilled people in their fields.

Because of my Apprenticeship I'm now a different person – I am much more confident and can talk to people more effectively. In the future, I'm going to teach Apprenticeships, I'm planning to progress and become a teacher and assessor.

You need focus and determination to do an Apprenticeship, you have to be able to say to yourself "I am set on this, it is what I want and I'm going to fight for it".

JAMES: STONEMASON AND CONTRACTS MANAGER



I completed my Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeships in Banker Stonemasonry four years ago and am now a Contracts Manager at a company who are consultants and conservators of historic buildings, monuments and sculpture. I first found out about Apprenticeships when my employer approached me and asked me to take it on; I was concerned at first as I thought it might have meant taking time off work to study and I wouldn't be paid for this time off, but this was all organised with my employer so that my wages didn't reduce.

In my view, an Apprenticeship is a way into a trade so that we can be qualified in what we do, it's another string to my bow and as a result of my Apprenticeship my company has been able to add another service to their expertise!

To do an Apprenticeship you need motivation and inclination, you have to really want to do it and see it through. Make sure you actually turn up at work and for training - you can't learn if you're not there!

For me, the best thing about doing an Apprenticeship is the learning - the tutors and teachers are all people who have really done the job and know the trade, you are learning the trade from the trade and not from a book. Everyone on my programme was likeminded and wanted to learn.

Whilst I was doing my Apprenticeship I competed in a UK Stone Federation competition called The UK Masonry Skills Challenge where I won a gold medal. This was huge for my confidence and even now, some four years later; this achievement is used as a promotional opportunity by my company. It really helped my career.

I had GCSEs and AS Levels and feel that the Apprenticeship option is better than going to University and ending up in debt. I have had loads of opportunities as a result of my Apprenticeship - I've become more involved in my company, have been managing projects for the last 5 years and I am now managing

contracts and am set to be made a Director of the company in the next month!

My Apprenticeship got me to where I am today. I now have the option to start my own company in the future.

JESS: Child Practitioner



I work in a nursery and have recently completed my Level 3 Apprenticeship in Childcare. I had GCSEs but felt that I was not academically strengthened and I wanted to learn by doing a practical job. For me, an Apprenticeship was a perfect option because you get experience of working in an actual workplace, you get paid to learn and work at the same time. It can also help you decide if you want to do what you're actually learning for a career. It really sets you up for the future.

When I was searching for my job, I used www.Apprenticeships.org.uk, I also looked up nurseries in my area and wrote a letter to each of them asking if they had any Apprentice positions. I was called back by one and went to look around, then I attended an interview and was successful in getting my position.

Use the www.Apprenticeships.org.uk website or call your local Training Provider or College – you can easily find a name for someone to speak to and find out more.

If you're interested in an Apprenticeship you will need to have a commitment to working and take responsibility for yourself – be aware that you have to balance work and study and understand that work is part of your life. When you've found a job, make sure you're happy with the employer and make sure you pay attention in the lessons you go to otherwise you won't get very far!

Doing an Apprenticeship has helped me realise what I want to do for my career.

Through my Apprenticeship I've had loads of opportunities, I've successfully completed my first aid certificate, I've had the opportunity to continue working as a permanent employee after completing my Apprenticeship and I've learnt valuable skills, got to know people and have increased my knowledge hugely. All of this will help me to progress in my chosen career.

In the future I am going to progress to do a Level 4 Apprenticeship. I'm already doing extra childcare units and all of this will help me progress in my chosen career.

LAURA: SECRETARY



I work as a Junior Secretary for a Member of Parliament and am doing a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Business Administration. I got 13 GCSEs and 4 AS Levels. I started sixth form but really wanted to be in a working environment; at the same time I also saw the importance of gaining qualifications too. A friend was doing an Apprenticeship and talked to me about what it was like, so I went along to my local Training Provider which was really informative.

An Apprenticeship is a way of learning and gaining qualifications whilst working and being in the working environment. The best thing about an Apprenticeship is gaining experience. You are working, gaining qualifications

You have got to want to learn alongside work. You've got to want to put in the effort to succeed.

and experience plus being paid at the same time.

Since starting My Apprenticeship, I've had loads of opportunities. I have:

- *Completed a First Aid course;*
- *Been to Westminster in London and had a tour of the House of Commons and House of Lords;*
- *Been to a staff open day and seen all the employee courses that are on offer and which I can take advantage of;*
- *Been on a trip to a Crown Court;*
- *Met city councillors and other professionals;*
- *Saved money!*

My biggest tips for people who are looking at Apprenticeships are to look on www.Apprenticeships.org.uk – I didn't realise how much was on the site until I looked! Also, think about your particular areas of interest, go to employers websites to find out more and see if they are advertising.

Doing an Apprenticeship has given me new skills,

experience in the workplace, extra qualifications and I've saved money at the same time all of which has made me a more independent person.

As it's a Business Administration course, I am learning new skills and what it is like to work in an office. They are general skills that I can carry on in lots of other organisations. After completing my Level 2 Apprenticeship, I plan to do Level 3.

LEAH: ADMINISTRATOR



I work in a training organisation and am doing an Apprenticeship in Business Administration. I found my Apprenticeship job through the vacancies search facility at www.Apprenticeships.org.uk. An Apprenticeship is a training programme which allows you to be in full-time employment and have a job, as well as gaining qualifications. It's an alternative to going on to Higher Education and it allows you to progress in your chosen career by continuing with training to higher levels.

I did GCSEs and three 'A'-Levels and I thought about going to University, but I didn't want to move away and I was worried about getting into debt. I knew that I wanted to earn a wage and support myself.

Since starting my Apprenticeship, I feel like a valued member of society as I'm working which gives me a feeling of self-worth.

The best things about Apprenticeships are earning and learning at the same time, being treated as a member of staff rather than being at College full-time where you are specifically a student. You get the same benefits as all the other employees – it's not a 'fake' job, you really feel part of the company and you positively benefit the company.

Since starting my Apprenticeship I've had many opportunities, I completed my Level 2 Apprenticeship and am now doing my Level 3 plus I've gained further certificates in the workplace. I've also had the opportunity to be self-motivated and be independent with my own workload. Doing an Apprenticeship has meant I can be independent in my own life too because I'm earning a wage and I can afford things like holidays which I wouldn't have been able to afford if I went to University.

If you're interested in Apprenticeships, my advice is to firstly try and decide what general area/broad vocation you are looking to do an Apprenticeship in, then do a web search for "Apprenticeships + your chosen area/vocation + your location" - this will give you loads of information about training providers in your area – call them and find out more.

I've found out about other job roles through watching other professionals in the workplace and in the future I'm really interested in becoming a tutor – I've already talked with my employer about progressing to this.

LEAH: RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT



I've recently completed a Level 3 Apprenticeship in Marketing and Communications. After my GCSEs, I chose to do an Apprenticeship because I wanted to do practical, hands-on work, but felt that I wanted to stay in education as well, so an Apprenticeship is the perfect choice.

For me, an Apprenticeship is an introduction to what work is going to be like for you in the future. You work and get a qualification at the same time. I found my job on www.Apprenticeships.org.uk, I did a general search on this website, found a job opening and went for an interview. If you're interested in an Apprenticeship, my advice would be to think about what you want to do in the future, but you don't need to be too specific – for example, I knew that I like talking to the public and I chose from there. I went to a couple of Apprenticeship Fairs which were really useful as you can actually talk to people at these and find out more from Colleges and Training Providers. It's also a good idea to get an understanding of the type of business you want to go into – go online and visit company websites to find out what they do and decide if it's something you want to be part of and whether it's where you want to be in the future. It's important that you enjoy the work you choose to do.

The best things about Apprenticeships are:

- *You gain a qualification;*
- *You get paid and get money in your pocket.*
- *You get experience of working which is something you don't get from a full-time education.*

To do an Apprenticeship, you need confidence – you will be working, not relying on your teachers, you have to balance your time to work and study so you need to be organised. I completed my Apprenticeship in 12 months - I got support from College, but you have to discipline yourself, it's different to school, you have to meet deadlines yourself. It's a challenge but it's definitely rewarding.

My Apprenticeship provided me with lots of opportunities. I took on more responsibility in sales and marketing within my company, I've completed my Chartered Institute of Marketing Certificate, I've attended an in-house sales course which my employer provided, I saved and got a brand new car and I've now got a full-time, permanent job.

My Apprenticeship is a qualification which I will have for life – it's on my CV forever and I will use all the knowledge I have gained in the future.

Overall, I would recommend Apprenticeships to anyone. You get good experience at work and you get a qualification which you hold forever – you can't lose!!

MARTINA: ELECTRICIAN



I'm an Electrician and have recently completed a Level 3 Apprenticeship in Electrical Installations and Maintenance. I already had numerous qualifications and certificates including GCSEs, 'A'-Levels, a Foundation Art course and certificates in dry stonewalling, chainsaws and horse training. I was doing lots of different jobs before my Apprenticeship and really wanted a solid trade.

My Apprenticeship meant that I was learning the theory and basics in College but I was also gaining experience from other people in a real working situation whilst earning money at the same time. Apprenticeships carry on the tradition of passing knowledge from one generation to the next. It's very empowering to 'skill-up'.

The qualification stays with you forever – it's always in your back pocket

The best things about my Apprenticeship were the everyday challenge of work, growing in confidence and competence and earning a wage. As an employee you have the opportunity to put forward your views and ideas which are valued; it's a great feeling to be useful. To do an Apprenticeship you will need drive, commitment and a willingness to 'muck in'. When you first start off, you aren't going to be doing major technical jobs, you are going to be observing and learning; be awake and don't wait to be asked to do something all the time, use your own initiative.

You don't finish your Apprenticeship and know everything! I will continue learning and gain more experience over the years, take on more responsibility and bigger projects. I want to go more into engineering and am interested in renewable energy. An Apprenticeship is not the end of the road, it is a stepping stone on to LOADS of opportunities!

Through my Apprenticeship, I had the opportunity to take part in competitions where I progressed to a national final achieving a UK Bronze Award. By being committed, working hard and finishing my Apprenticeship early, I got my employer to sponsor a new qualification.

Give it a go! I would definitely endorse Apprenticeships, it is a really good move to make.

MOLLY: ADMINISTRATOR



I work at a training company and am currently doing a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Business Administration. I got GCSEs at school and did 'A' Levels for 4 months but didn't like sitting in the classroom, I wanted to be more independent and free. An Apprenticeship is perfect as you are still learning but you have a job and are getting paid.

You get so much more mature when you are working as you're in a business where everyone has a proper job that is a big part of their lives. You get more experience and different opportunities from just being at school. I really enjoy going to College one day a week and the ability to earn money is an important factor in doing an Apprenticeship.

With an Apprenticeship you have a job and you're earning. This has enabled me to go on holiday and get a car.

I see an Apprenticeship as a great starting point for your career, it gives you a qualification which you'll always have, plus you can progress or even change careers. An Apprenticeship is a qualification and it's the experience that you need. I have also found that I still have my friends from school and now I've also got College friends and my workplace friends so I have a good social network which is really enjoyable.

I found my job on www.Apprenticeships.org.uk. I kept searching for "Administration roles" on the website and found a vacancy locally; I went to interview and was successful in getting the job. I found that I needed confidence as it can be intimidating to be in a new workplace if you're a young person. You need to work hard and get used to it and eventually you'll find that other people in the workplace will be coming to you for advice and ideas about work!

Don't give up looking for an Apprenticeship job! Some people can have no success for a while and end up going back to school which is not what they really want to do. So keep trying!

My Apprenticeship has provided me with lots of opportunities. I've appeared on a radio show to talk about Apprenticeships and have also been to careers fairs, these are experiences that you just don't get at school, they are completely different. In the future, I will progress to a Managerial position - an Apprenticeship can take you to somewhere you want to be in life.

An Apprenticeship doesn't close opportunities for you, it opens them up!

NATHAN: ELECTRICIAN



I am doing a Level 3 Electrotechnical Apprenticeship and work for a well-established electrical installation, engineers and contractors firm. I did my GCSEs, AS Levels and also BTEC Levels 2 and 3 in Public Service. After this I felt I needed to go and get a trade that you can fall back on and be secure. An Apprenticeship is a good way to earn money, I'm now in the third year of my Apprenticeship and the money I earn has increased.

I would describe an Apprenticeship as workplace learning, you learn all about your chosen trade/area from people who have job experience and know exactly what they're doing - they're guiding you to be the best you can be.

To be successful in an Apprenticeship you need to have a positive attitude and commitment - you need to be motivated when you wake up in the morning, so make sure you choose an area/trade that you really want to do.

My tips for people interested in an Apprenticeship are to send your CV to as many companies as you can, I didn't get many replies, but I stuck with it and found my job. You should also go and speak to your local Training Provider or College, they give you loads of advice and guidance from the very beginning and onwards throughout your Apprenticeship. Just go and speak to them, they're really helpful and they're all nice people – you can talk to them easily.

An Apprenticeship opens up so many opportunities for you - it's up to you how far you want to push yourself.

Through my Apprenticeship, I've had the opportunity to work away from home, I've been through different courses, covering areas such as asbestos and driving cherry pickers (access platform cranes) which all adds to my experience and qualifications.

When you've completed your Apprenticeship, you can choose to go on to all sorts of different roles, you can take different courses, you can go to University, or you can continue on in your chosen trade/area. You can choose to live and work abroad if you want in the future – you can use your Apprenticeship wherever you live.

Speak to your local Training Provider or College, they give you loads of advice and guidance from the very beginning and onwards throughout your Apprenticeship. Just go and speak to them, they're really helpful and they're all nice people – you can talk to them easily.

ROB: AUTO TECHNICIAN



I'm a Technician at an automotive garage. After my GCSEs, I did a full-time Level 1 Motor Mechanics qualification and then chose to do an Apprenticeship because I really like hands-on work instead of being in a classroom which can be tedious. My job is definitely hands-on and is very varied and interesting, plus through doing an Apprenticeship, you earn a wage – you are paid to learn. Through an Apprenticeship you learn something new every day, but you are not treated like a

schoolchild, you are treated with respect. You're still learning but you don't feel like you're at school, it's an easier environment.

Getting paid is the main advantage of doing an Apprenticeship. I do 'block release' which means I do one week in College every 6 weeks (some of my friends do one day in College each week). I enjoy this as you are not bombarded with College because you are not there every day, you are at work a lot more than you're at College.

You are not bombarded with College because you are not there every day, you are at work a lot more than you're at College.

I found my Apprenticeship job through speaking to people and my advice to people looking for an Apprenticeship would be that you get a lot more response if you actually go and visit companies instead of just sending out your CV or a letter – it shows you are keen. It's worthwhile looking on the internet, but I have found it better to talk to someone face to face.

You're still learning but you don't feel like you're at school, it's an easier environment than school.

You need to be very interested in what you are doing as an Apprenticeship and you need to be 100% committed, make sure you enjoy what you're doing and turn up every day. If you don't know what you would specifically like to do as an Apprenticeship, decide if you have an interest in a particular area and go and see companies and ask to do unpaid work experience for a week, you will then get to know if it's an area you wish to take further - plus you will have experience to put on your CV.

A group from my Apprenticeship course had the opportunity to go on a fully paid trip to Germany for 2 weeks. For the first week we went to a College to learn with our counterparts and for the second week we completed work placements at VW, Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche and Scania.

My Apprenticeship has given me the opportunity to do something new every day and I've also had the opportunity to do short courses in different topics like ABS and Diagnostics. I am going to be fully qualified next year and I will keep on progressing my qualifications.