

Case Study: Apprenticeships

Alessandro Calamita and Resolve IT Solutions

The 'hands on' nature of Apprenticeships and the pressures of solving real problems had always appealed to eighteen year old, Alessandro Calamita, who had his sights set upon an IT Apprenticeship since school. Although he enjoyed IT lessons, Alessandro craved the responsibility that would come with being in a real working environment. For Resolve IT Solutions, this was exactly the sort of young person that could bring something to their business.

Initially, Alessandro was unsuccessful in finding an IT Apprenticeship and worked as an Apprentice at a car garage instead. Although he developed valuable communication and customer service skills in this role, Alessandro continued to scour the internet for Apprenticeship opportunities within IT. Eventually he came across a position at Resolve IT Solutions in Sheffield.

The company had been approached by e-Skills, the sector skills council for Business and Information Technology, about a new Microsoft Partner Apprenticeship scheme geared towards small businesses. Resolve was encouraged to shape the role of the Apprenticeship to suit the company and its values. Jez Seaton, Team Leader at Resolve, played a key role in developing the Apprenticeship position and the recruitment process. He comments,

"Our initial reaction was one of scepticism but also of interest. Resolve understands the value of combining learning with work and we like to be approached about different methods, even if there's an element of risk.

"We were given a selection of candidates by QA Training but we were able to choose the approach that we took to interview them. This was very helpful as it enabled us to get our personalities across and the values of the company, meaning that we found somebody who fits and knew what to expect of the position."

Alessandro combines his work at Resolve with weekly sessions at QA training in Leeds. At the beginning of his Apprenticeship, he spent a large proportion of his time at QA doing technical training, Business and Sales and practical assignments. After becoming CompTIA A+ qualified, Alessandro gradually increased the amount of time he spent at Resolve. The two elements of the Apprenticeship are complementary and Jez works closely with QA to ensure that the qualifications and training materials are up to date and relevant to the industry. He explains,

"We identified that one of the Microsoft courses that Alessandro was offered is slightly outdated and so I made a suggestion as to how they could update it so that it fits with industry expectations. QA listened and made the necessary changes. This is great because it benefits not just Alessandro, but the rest of his group and other employers."



From day one, Alessandro found himself 'thrown in at the deep end' – which is exactly what he wanted. He explains,

“On my first day I was given a task and told to run with it. I was surprised at the amount of responsibility that I was given straight away but, you learn to use your initiative and become a good problem solver, as you are dealing with real people, with real problems.”

Jez has noticed that having Alessandro around has helped to foster a learning environment for everybody at Resolve:

“Al is surrounded by people to help him. If he asks a question and somebody provides an answer, they feel like they are giving something back to the people they work with. If they don't know the answer, they will go and find it out, which means they are developing their own knowledge.”

Alessandro's ambition is to become a Network Administrator, ideally in a permanent position at Resolve. He says,

“Resolve has given me the opportunity to start at the bottom and work my way up. I had to persevere as I experienced a few problems trying to get this position, but it was worth it because it's opened doors for me.”

The sense of loyalty that Alessandro possesses towards Resolve is part of the reason that the company values Apprenticeships, as Jez explains:

“When you invest in a young person and they appreciate these investments, you could have an employee for life. Not only this, as their employer, you offer a bespoke course so that everything your Apprentice is learning is relevant to today's industry.



“The benefit for us has been quite astounding. Al's approach to the business is fresh and it has changed our perspective towards the recruitment process. Financially, it makes sense for us; we're giving Alessandro a fair reward for the commitment he's giving us.

“The best way for a business to find out what an Apprenticeship means for them is to give it go because they will be surprised at the differences it makes.”

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