



NEWS RELEASE

William Hughes apprentice programme provides young people with engineering career opportunities

Apprentices are an important part of William Hughes' recruitment programme and the company continues to invest in this valuable resource. William Hughes is a specialist manufacturer of springs and bent wire components for the global automotive and aerospace industries and the apprenticeships provide an excellent platform for young people to develop their careers. During the 4 year programme, apprentices have the unique opportunity to experience the full range of manufacturing processes at the William Hughes factory and head office in Stalbridge, Dorset.

"The success of our company relies on its people and our apprenticeship scheme provides the opportunity for young people to commence and develop their careers within our organisation," said Emma Burgon, Engineering Director, William Hughes. "As we continue to grow, we are constantly creating opportunities for skilled setters together with middle and senior managers. We are delighted that many of these positions are being filled by apprentices when they have finished their formal training."

Careful selection is the key to recruiting and retaining the right people and William Hughes use local resources including job centres, local newspapers and further education establishments to attract potential apprentices. Interested candidates are invited to attend an open evening at Stalbridge, where they are introduced to the company's activities and learn how the apprentice scheme works. They are also shown around the factory and offices, so they see what working in manufacturing is really like.

Following the open evening, selected candidates are invited to the factory for a week's work experience and this provides an excellent opportunity to assess them for suitability for the scheme. Once selected, candidates are encouraged to pursue an NVQ in general manufacturing which can

be converted to an HNC and HND level where appropriate. Progress is monitored by the HR manager with regular meetings and reviews of college reports. Flexibility is important with individual programmes being modified / adapted to suit each candidate's strengths and interests.

Richard Haime, now aged 32, is an excellent example of how the apprentice programme works. "I joined William Hughes as an apprentice in 2002," said Richard who has now progressed to European Sales Engineer / Key Account Manager. "As part of my structured training, I obtained ONC, HNC and HND qualifications and have also achieved Level 3 in Management Studies. I am currently learning German and my career with William Hughes has developed through the factory floor to a management role. My background and qualifications are ideally suited to my current position which involves spending a significant amount of time visiting our customers in Europe, preparing tenders for big automotive contracts."

"Manufacturing offers a unique opportunity to provide secure long term jobs at attractive levels of income," added Emma Burgon. "Within our manufacturing facility, there are opportunities for all levels of academia from the school leaver aged 17, through to the university graduate. Once inside a manufacturing organisation, the opportunity to progress upwards is limitless - it is down the individual to prove they have the skill and drive to succeed."

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