



Taking on Apprentices is “Common Sense” for Industry say Paro Ltd



“We train our Apprentices to work for us – and over the 20 years we have been offering Apprenticeships, more than 70% of them have been completed. That is an excellent success story for Paro Ltd and the Apprentices.” Ian Mathias, Paro Ltd.

Building Services Engineers Company Paro Ltd is based at East Molesey, Surrey. It is a small company with 25 employees specialising in electrical installation. There are currently six Apprentices and the company is planning to take on other Apprentices next year.

Bush telegraph

Ian Mathias says: “We have been taking on Apprentices for 20 years – pretty well since the company started. For us it is common sense to take on people and train them properly – otherwise where would we get good, well-trained employees that understood our company culture?”

“We have never had to advertise... the bush telegraph works very well for us as we have a good track record for training, and both training providers and individuals call us directly to discuss Electrical Apprenticeships.”

Listening pays off

Ian explains that a successful Apprentice will be the one who shows an interest in their work right from the start.

“The more they contribute, the more we will support them – and the quicker they will learn and progress. Obviously the first couple of months they will be watching, listening and learning, acting as assistants to our trained Electrical Engineers. This might feel like very basic work but in many ways it is the most important part of their training: If they absorb how our qualified engineers work and understand the processes, they will progress much quicker when we teach them to do a job.”.

Progression

After a few weeks Apprentices will progress from being a ‘useful pair of hands’ to being given basic electrical jobs to do – all supervised by a qualified electrician.

Good communication

“After that first step, the rate they progress is to some extent up to each Apprentice,” says Ian. “It is not just about the technical skills either, good communication is very important. If they can



discuss what they are doing with both their colleagues and the customer, they will do a better job.”

Paro Ltd takes on Apprentices of all ages – and as well as younger Apprentices they currently have one male Apprentice who was over 40 when he started his training and a female qualified electrical engineer who began her career as a veterinary nurse before retraining.

Individual attention

“When someone calls us enquiring about Apprenticeships, we look at them as an individual, not just their qualifications or what school or college they have attended,” explains Ian. “Generally, we are more likely to take on someone with a little life experience – even if it is just a couple of years out of school working elsewhere, because we know they are likely to be more committed to the position with Paro Ltd, having experienced other job opportunities out there.”

Ian adds that Paro Ltd is keen to retain its trained Apprentices. “We do not want to train them for other companies, we would rather they stayed with us and worked their way up through the company to become foremen or take other positions of responsibility.”

Respect

Out of the five Apprentices that have been trained one of the company’s Apprentices is Ian Johnson who was recently nominated for Apprentice of the Year.

He said: “I try to conduct myself properly at work and always be professional and respect my colleagues. There are always new things to learn, so I ask a lot of questions of my qualified colleagues. I think if you



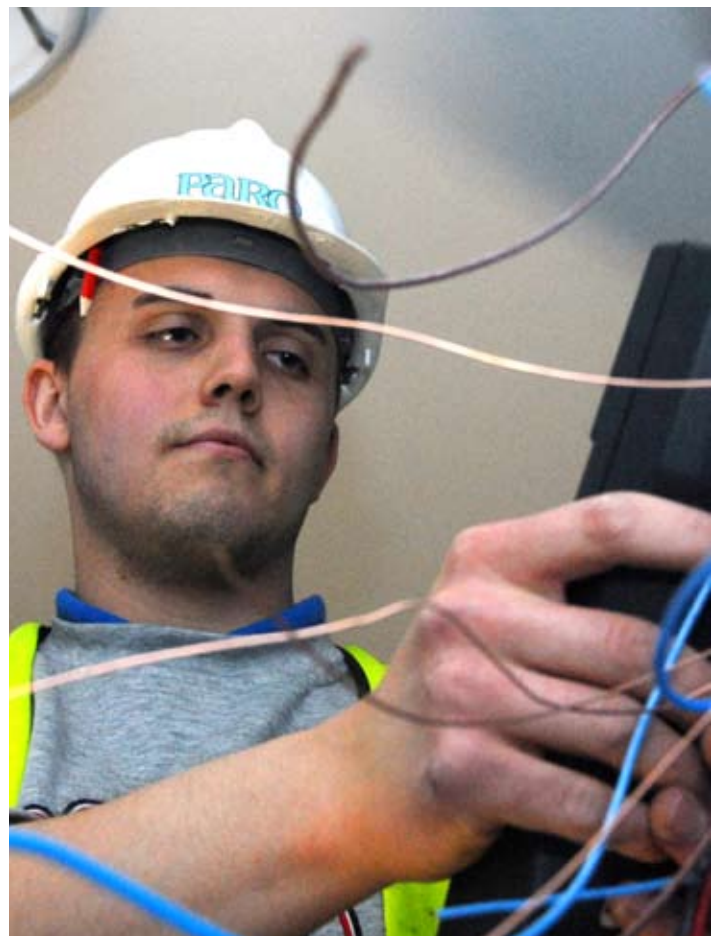
“There are always new things to learn, so I ask a lot of questions of my qualified colleagues.”

show an interest you will be more likely to be involved with new projects and given more responsibility.”

“A company must be able to dedicate enough time to support a new Apprentice, otherwise they won’t make a successful start to their training,” he says. “I can’t see any reason why we won’t be taking on any new Apprentices in the future. It’s good for them and very good for our business.”

Good teamwork

“An Apprentice with the right attitude and outlook on their career has a good future with Paro Ltd,” said Ian. “It is them the customers meet and if they are trained properly and have the right approach, they benefit both themselves and Paro Ltd. Good teamwork makes a successful business.”



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Want more information on how to benefit from the Apprenticeship programme in South London?

If you would like further information about Apprenticeships in South London call the Apprenticeship Hotline on 0800 169 4824 or visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

