



# Producing a workforce that is fit for purpose



In October 2015 NITAL Training and Development opened the doors of their first specialist engineering and manufacturing academy in Kettering Northamptonshire. In recent times a lot has changed in relation to apprenticeship training and NITAL, therefore, knew there had to be significant changes to the charity.

The government is keen to ensure apprenticeships are fit for purpose and began a significant overhaul of apprenticeship programmes and the way they are funded.

The vision of NITAL CEO Alan Smith and the Board of Trustees was a training academy based in a suitable location that would provide apprentices with facilities and surroundings that would enable them to train and develop effectively.

This academy would be the ideal hub for those looking to learn the correct engineering and manufacturing fundamentals and techniques, an academy that would help individuals develop and learn all aspects associated with what is a very interesting and in depth discipline, an academy which would also help them grow as individuals.

From a bare shell and with help from Cubex and POC Management NITAL now have a superb facility.

**Cubex Contracts** significantly remodelled the building, adding additional welfare facilities, and a mezzanine floor for additional training rooms.

Andy MacKenzie from Cubex said: "Cubex were delighted to work with NITAL on this project. The new building provided a vast amount of flexible space for NITAL to utilise and grow, however, it required some adaptation to completely meet their needs.



James Cooney, Managing Director of Cooney Marine (left) with Pete Eades NITAL Fabrication and Welding Lecturer.

"We spent time working with the customer to ensure that the design encompassed all of the features they needed including, and, after careful consideration, we proposed that a mezzanine was installed to make full use of the double height and house two classrooms.

Underneath we planned the area to include a kitchenette, changing rooms for the apprentices and storage facilities.

"In the remaining space on the ground floor we planned the practical learning area which included

custom-built bays for welding machines, machine tools and CNC machine tools and bench fitting areas.

"The work was completed over five weeks and included an extensive team of contractors working with the Cubex Contracts project management and design team.

"We have been thrilled that the result has provided NITAL with a unique training facility and wish them every success in their new building."

**POC Management Ltd** has installed an integrated

security system consisting of CCTV, intruder alarms and access control, with the capability of remote monitoring.

David Matthews said: "The bespoke solution offers cost effective, high-quality protection to the new site, giving NITAL peace of mind that they are protected and secure.

"POC sees NITAL as a key player in preserving the future of the next generation, and were proud to install the security measures needed to safeguard their new building."

The academy is a specialist training centre established to train people to industry standards meeting the needs of the sector.

Those employers who have already visited the academy have seen how different it is to any other engineering and manufacturing training offer in this area.

Specifically, the academy will meet the needs of those working within engineering and manufacture, and, as of September this year the academy will have the facility to deliver a range of disciplines covering mechanical manufacturing engineering, fabrication and welding, fluid power, electrical and electronic, CAD, fitting, maintenance engineering.

Dan Barker NITAL Training Academy Manager said: "All learners will gain knowledge in the fundamentals of engineering across a range of disciplines, time will be split evenly between theory and practical work to ensure all learners are properly prepared for the working environment. This will also be a common thread across all disciplines, so employers will benefit hugely from the programme."

NITAL deliver Intermediate, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeship levels along with tailored training solutions. They work with a huge range of organisations and the ethos is the same for each - meet the needs of the employer and ensure any apprenticeship or training programme is specific to each of them.

Each employer will go through an initial consultation to guarantee each training programme is designed to suit them. The focus is on an individual's development providing right levels of support to nurture talent and potential. NITAL have developed the Academy and have participated in the Government's push for the new employer-led range of Trailblazer qualifications specifically related to engineering and manufacture to ensure this happens.

A good example of how NITAL truly meet the need of their employers

is the relationship with Cooney Marine in Kettering, specialists in stainless steel engineering for the international marine industry and at the forefront of design, engineering and manufacturing technology. Having products and capabilities acknowledged by the architectural industry for projects from the new Welsh Assembly buildings to the City of London the recruitment of apprentices is a no brainer.

However, MD James Cooney, has always preferred candidates to have already achieved a Level 2 engineering programme as he believed the correct fundamentals would have already been learned before joining his business. Unfortunately, in the past this hasn't happened so at Easter, Cooney Marine will recruit a number of apprentices directly from the NITAL Training academy full time Level 2 engineering group

After meeting the learners and seeing what the academy has to offer, James Cooney said: "I am very impressed with the training academy, it was great to see the students getting back to the basics and learning them properly, it will provide them with the best foundation and prepare them to be work ready from the moment they join us."

When James has selected the successful learners each will be given the opportunity to train, develop and establish themselves with Cooney Marine leading to secure, sustainable employment. They will progress to an Advanced Apprenticeship and attend day release at the NITAL academy in Mechanical Engineering Manufacture or Fabrication and Welding.

Apprenticeships represent an excellent opportunity for an individual to start on a very meaningful career path and also for an employer to recruit the very best emerging talent.

Simon Webster Head of Business and Development said: "The academy allows us to offer employers engineering and manufacturing apprenticeship programmes that work. Each student attending the centre will learn and develop the required levels of knowledge and understanding essential to becoming an engineer. We already ensure an incredibly high standard of work-based learning delivery in company, the addition of the academy ensures, we believe, that our engineering and manufacturing apprenticeship, training and development service provision is unrivalled!"



Engineering Apprentice Chloe Betts. © Business Times



NITAL's Alan Smith with Cubex Contracts Managing Director Andy MacKenzie. © Business Times



NITAL Chief Executive Alan Smith (centre) with Craig Morris (left) and David Matthews, Directors of POC Management. © Business Times



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