

## Top 10 Things About Being An Apprentice Maisey Woodland, Customer Service Apprentice

Do you know what an apprentice is? Have you ever been or are you currently an apprentice?

Here at *Innovate Awarding*, our job is to provide you with a happy apprenticeship assessment experience. We live and breathe apprenticeships and have ex-apprentices and current apprentices working in our business, and we all love it and see the opportunities an apprenticeship offers. I am a 17 year old Customer Service Apprentice here at *Innovate Awarding*.

Well, if you are thinking about hiring an apprentice, becoming an apprentice, or are simply interested in what it's all about, I hope you find my list on the top 10 things about being an apprentice interesting.



### Experience

Being an apprentice provides many different experiences that can support personal and professional growth. Some of the examples of experiences I have had include: work meals; team Away Days; business meetings - all of these have allowed me to acquire new skills, as I have looked at things from varying perspectives.

Due to *Innovate Awarding* being quite a small company, it has enabled me to be able to meet everyone and get to know everyone more personally rather than just in passing. A lot of other apprenticeships have this advantage, and in bigger companies, where they have lots of apprentices, you can all learn together and from each other.

Working as an apprentice, I have been able to use the previous competence I already had into my job role and refine it further. I did Drama in school, and I now can use my skills in speaking to successfully converse and communicate with the providers and employers we work with properly.

Working as an apprentice, and as you spend more time here, you gradually become close with everyone you work around. You care for them as well. So, when there is a monumental accomplishment in the company or significant growth in company development, I take pride in it and what others have done too.

Being a 17 year old learning all these skills in an apprenticeship has improved my confidence in myself and the skills I have to offer. I will continue to recommend apprenticeships to young people like myself who are just trying to become an efficient professional, and an improved person both generally and in the 'job world'.



### Always learning

I sometimes think that we are all apprentices but just without the official badging of it. There are a lot of similarities between employees and apprentices, occasionally more than we thought. Through our daily working experience, we learn something new or find an enhanced way of doing something (or indeed make mistakes we do not wish to repeat).

About mistakes. We all make them! We are all human. I believe it is healthy to be able to make mistakes. Otherwise we would just continue to do everything correctly, and never have the chance to learn or advance yourself! An apprenticeship provides a formal way of recognising this learning. Hands-on experience that is also rewarded through achieving your certificate, which becomes a kitemark of quality for an employer and employers that you may wish to work for in the future.

I can personally confirm that being able to go straight into a work environment allows you to adjust to your surroundings instantly, due to it being so out of your comfort zone. I was put into a workplace filled with lovely, welcoming, down-to-earth people, so it was easy to settle. There is no better way to learn than doing it all hands-on and practically, rather than just reading from a textbook, which, again, I don't believe is the most effective way of learning. So, if you are a more practical learner such as myself, apprenticeships are for you!



### Apprenticeship Standards

Although for most apprenticeships you work normal business hours during an apprenticeship, you will also do what is called 'Off The Job training'. This can be various tasks/activities related to your apprenticeship that allow you to grow and demonstrate the skills that you are building. Your trainer (whether from your employer or outside) will regularly meet with you to offer support and guidance, and to ensure that you are on track to meet the needs of the End-point Assessment you will have at the end of your apprenticeship course. They will also ensure that you have practice assessments to put you in the best position to pass your final assessments and to gain your apprenticeship certificate.

The other really exciting thing about an apprenticeship is that the skills, knowledge and behaviours you will need to demonstrate during the programme and in your End-point Assessment have been determined by employers themselves. An apprenticeship allows you to grow the skills that employers have said they need, so it ensures that you are perfectly equipped for employment both during and after completing your apprenticeship programme.

So not only are you learning and earning on the job, you get an apprenticeship certificate that employers respect.



### A stepping stone

An apprenticeship is a great stepping stone to setting out your professional career. Most people set out on one path but will swap and change throughout their working life. An apprenticeship provides an opportunity to find out what you love, what your strengths are and what working environment suits you best. It doesn't matter who you are or what your background is, an apprenticeship is a great new chapter for anyone - no matter what profession it is in.



### The support

One thing that's guaranteed is that you will be allocated a trainer or someone from the workplace to work with you throughout your apprenticeship. This is a vital role as they ensure you are working to learn the skills, knowledge and behaviours set out against the Apprenticeship Standard. They will also make sure that you are provided with guidance and that you are on track to complete and pass your apprenticeship. All trainers, whether from your employer or an external training provider, will have been trained in understanding the requirements of your apprenticeship, so teaching guidance will also be given. They know what success looks like.



### Rewarding

There is no better feeling than working for your own earnings. Simple as that.

As well as this, of course, you get an official apprenticeship certificate to demonstrate how hard you have worked at the end of your apprenticeship. This gives you a 'hard work does indeed pay off' feeling.



### Meeting new people

I have met and spoken with so many apprentices who talk about how their confidence has grown during an apprenticeship. Meeting people you have not met before, experiencing the way different people work and live, and just being able to be in an environment that allows you to grow as a person. I have learnt lots from the people I work with, which is not just about the things I need to know to pass my apprenticeship. I think they have learnt lots from me as well. It's always great to gain other people's views and opinion on how we work and what we can do better.



### Opportunities

Apprentices are not always school leavers, and many people who are apprentices are either retraining or moving to a totally different career after many years in one profession. Whichever way we look at it, apprenticeships open doors to new skills and experiences which may not have otherwise been available.

I personally have been invited to the AELP conference in London, and I am so excited because the more opportunities I have to do these kinds of things provides me with inspiration from others and allows me to share my thoughts and ideas in a professional and effective manner.

I also managed to pass my maths functional skills, which I really struggled with. I have to say thanks to everyone at work for remaining supportive and positive, which has resulted in me feeling confident and more motivated in myself.



### You're working and not in school or college

So many apprentices say, 'you get treated like an adult'. Although you will have to pass assessments as part of your apprenticeship, it is totally about demonstrating the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you have developed as part of your job. Lots of people wish they had been told about apprenticeships sooner and fully understood what it is about. That's why I want to keep telling people how fantastic an apprenticeship is!



### We love Apprenticeships

The most important thing is, I have seen people become successful through their apprenticeship experience. I have seen companies become more successful and productive through offering an apprenticeship programme, and I am very lucky to have a job within a great company that delivers assessments for apprenticeship programmes; it has created a passion for something that I didn't know existed when I was choosing my options when leaving school. Apprenticeships are the way forward!

So, if you are currently contemplating hiring or becoming an apprentice, I would 100% recommend you do your research and get stuck right in! Trust me, you won't regret it!