



## Progressing and retaining young talent

A guide for employers

Young people are very ambitious, and in our 2015 Youth Survey they told us that besides pay, **the opportunity to progress** is the most important thing they look for in a job. However, by age 24 young people are **almost twice as likely as 18 year olds** to say that they don't feel like their education and employment experience is helping them to progress their career. This suggests that not all employers are supporting their young employees to progress and reach their full potential as effectively as they could.

Ensuring that you have a clear talent pipeline linked to your workforce development strategy that enables young employees to progress to more advanced roles is also vital to ensure that you get **maximum return on your investment** in developing home-grown talent. It will also minimise your recruitment costs and help you to retain all the bespoke skills and expertise that your young employees have developed.

### Key things to consider:

- How are you identifying which key skills and experience young employees need to gain in order to meet the essential requirements of your more advanced roles?
- How flexible are your learning and development plans to your young employees' different interests and learning styles?
- How are you tracking young employees' progress?
- What other steps are you taking to retain and grow young talent?

### Step by step

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#### 1. Identify the skills and experience that young employees need to develop

In order to help your young employees to progress to the next rung of the ladder in your company, you need to identify the kinds of skills and experience you ask candidates for in your more advanced roles. By looking at the job descriptions of roles in the tier above entry level in your company structure, you will be able to identify a list of skills and experience young employees will need to gain. You can then embed training and activities that cover these areas into your young employees' work plans.

For example, **Unipart** identified a need to develop 'Industry-ready' manufacturing skills in their talent pipeline that were not being met effectively by the market, so they recently opened the Institute for Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (AME), a £32million joint collaboration



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between Coventry University and Unipart Manufacturing and the UK's first 'Faculty on the Factory Floor'.

The AME provides students with world class facilities combined with exposure with real-life manufacturing challenges and represents a step change for manufacturing engineering education. Students are offered a range of work placements and sometimes even sponsorship to encourage retention and graduate with the right skills and experience to equip them for successful careers in manufacturing engineering.

EE also identified that two key skills all applicants for permanent roles need to demonstrate are customer service experience and digital expertise, so they have introduced two training modules for all call centre apprentices. Once they have gained these skills, this allows apprentices to look at a much wider range of job vacancies across the whole company, giving them more progression opportunities. As result, 60% of call apprentices have progressed into a full-time role with EE to date.

## **2. Build flexibility and personalisation into learning and development plans**

Young employees have different interests and different strengths, and ultimately they will be interested in progressing down different career paths in your company. Building flexibility into young people's learning and development plans allows them to both develop all essential key skills as well as give them a chance to pursue training opportunities and additional projects that appeal to their individual interests.

Young people also learn at different paces, so learning and development plans should not be set to rigid timescales. It's important to have processes to check their progress on a regular basis such as monthly reviews or learning and development sessions, and you can use these opportunities to identify any individual additional support needed.

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### **City and Guilds Kineo e-learning programme**

City & Guilds Kineo is a global workplace learning company that helps employers improve their businesses' performance through learning and technology.

As part of the City & Guilds Group since 2012, City & Guilds Kineo combines 130 years of training expertise with its innovative learning technology solutions. City & Guilds Kineo also offers Learning Management Systems (LMS), apprenticeships, accreditation and managed learning services.

For more information, please go to the [City & Guilds Kineo website](#).

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## **3. Consider additional things you can do to build up your retention strategy**

If you don't have a strategy in place to make sure your progression opportunities are attractive to young employees, you risk losing all the investment of time and resources you have made to develop your young talent. Once young people have gained sufficient experience, they are likely to look elsewhere if there is a more attractive offer available.

Many companies protect their talent pipeline by offering guaranteed roles to apprentices if they successfully complete their training. For example, **Barclays** offer apprentices who complete a Foundation apprenticeship with them the chance to apply for a place on their higher apprenticeship programme.

**Livin Housing** has achieved an 80% retention rate of their apprentices after they have completed their training by focusing on creating a highly attractive workplace for young people. For example, they pay apprentices the living wage, invest significantly in learning and development, encourage apprentices to represent the company as ambassadors and give them all the same employment terms and conditions as other staff.

## Case Studies

Read more about how [EE equip their apprentices with the skills they need for their next role](#)

## Where to go next?

- Progressing young talent is just one way to future proof your business. Use our [Youth Employment Assessment Tool](#) to find out what you're doing well and get some ideas on how to improve in other areas