

# Notes and news

## Tui expands its apprenticeship scheme

Leisure-travel firm Tui UK and Ireland will deliver more than 2,000 new apprentices by 2020. New schemes to become an aircraft engineer, a digital expert and an information technology specialist will be introduced, as well as an apprenticeship standard to become a pilot.

The Luton-based business is opening up opportunities at its head office and its 600 UK retail outlets.

Since 2000, more than 5,500 apprenticeships have been offered by Thomson and First Choice, two Tui holiday brands. Both will add to this in coming years with candidates able to apply for schemes in areas such as information technology and engineering. There will be a strong emphasis on offering new apprentices the opportunity to rise through the company's ranks.

The company is also committed to developing a new kind of apprenticeship for pilots, whose funding will make becoming a pilot a more accessible career option for many.

Caroline Kitcher, HR Director at Tui UK and Ireland, said: "Offering 2,000 more apprenticeships – adding to the 5,500 we have trained in the last 15 years – is testament to our commitment to providing fantastic careers in our growing business. Working for Tui can open up a world of opportunities. We pride ourselves on providing our people with quality training and development and exciting career prospects, nationally and internationally. We are proud to make an industry-first pledge to develop a pilot apprenticeship standard, using the new apprentice levy to change the existing training framework. This is in addition to an exciting scheme to train engineers and IT specialists in our new dedicated IT academy."

Kirstie Donnelly, Managing Director of City and Guilds, commented: "Tui UK and Ireland demonstrates how engaged an employer can be in apprenticeships and skills development. It recognizes them as a natural mechanism to develop the talent it needs to remain an industry leader, as well as investing for the future."

She explained that, in a period of uncertainty, before the government provides more clarity around apprenticeship policy reforms and the levy, it shows real commitment that Tui is pressing ahead with its apprenticeship plans because it is the right thing to do. The company is maintaining momentum but importantly maintaining it with a total focus on quality first.

"Whether it is a career to train to become a pilot or as a customer adviser, Tui recognizes that good quality entry training programs through to apprenticeships and higher-level technical careers training are essential for it to compete."

Four years since joining Thomson as a Retail Apprentice, 20-year-old Thomas Newby, from Sheffield, spends the Winter at the city's store and the Summer on Thomson Airways flights.

It is a role he says continues to challenge and delight, offering the variety and customer focus that was lacking in the travel and tourism course at college that he left in 2012 to join Thomson. He was apprentice of the year in the Doncaster-Sheffield region in 2013 and nominated for a national gong in the same year.

"I love the variety of my work. It perhaps sounds clichéd, but I genuinely enjoy helping customers to discover their smile," he said. "My role puts me in the lucky position of being able to help families to find their perfect holiday and ensure their journey is as seamless as possible. Sometimes I see people on board who booked with me earlier in the year."

He continued: "I have learned an unbelievable amount and I have no regrets about giving up purely classroom-based learning. When I joined I was really shy, but now I am trusted to handle

all kinds of enquiries from our customers, and I love interacting with them. I would recommend an apprenticeship to anyone.”

Tui UK and Ireland, a member of Tui Group, has more than 10,000 employees and serves over 5.5 million customers a year.

### **City and Guilds auditors praise drainage course**

City and Guilds has reaccredited Lanes Group PLC’s drainage-engineer course while praising its high standards and quality teaching materials after a recent audit.

The course is designed to ensure that Lanes Group drainage engineers achieve a uniform and verifiable standard in blockage engineering across all depots.

In the reaccreditation audit report, Lanes Group was praised for the rigor of its management controls, the quality of its course materials and the “very effective” feedback system for capturing ideas from candidates.

Paul McParland, Health, Safety, Quality and Environment Manager for Lanes Group, said: “The reaccreditation process was very positive and confirmed that our approach to drainage-engineer education and training is correct. We are continuing to build our City and Guilds education program, with a commitment to carrying out eight courses in the next 12 months. This training gives our teams a recognized qualification and additional confidence that they have the know-how and capability to work to a high and safe standard.”

The City and Guilds auditor was particularly impressed with the rigorous approach to testing that skills have been learned during the two-day course, which includes classroom, practical education and field inspections.

Paul McParland explained: “Candidates have to pass three tests to gain their qualification. They have to achieve a high pass mark. Also, for five key questions, focused mainly on health and safety, it is mandatory that they get the right answers. Finally, the practical application of what candidates have learned is tested later in the field.”

This third element is done during one of the regular safety inspections Lanes Group managers carry out at work sites. They use the safety, health and the environment digital health and safety app to assess and record the performance of City and Guilds candidates, measuring them against set standards.

Lanes Group plans to expand its City and Guilds education program, launched in 2013, by adding a new course for closed-circuit television drainage-survey engineers.

### **Ex-BHS staff offered training support**

e-Learning provider Learning Heroes is helping former staff of high-street retailer BHS to gain new skills and improve their CV.

BHS entered administration in May 2016. The retailer had more than 160 UK stores, all of which were closed by August 20, leaving thousands of workers searching for a new position. Learning Heroes offered BHS employees free, unrestricted access to its library of e-learning courses in order to help them to learn new skills and improve their job prospects.

Mike McGann, of Learning Heroes, said: “After the news of BHS closing came out we gave the staff members affected access to all our content for six months, enabling them to update their CVs and helping them to secure new employment.”

Companies that Learning Heroes works with include the National Health Service, Specsavers, npower, TalkTalk, AstraZeneca and Royal Mail.

### **Next Tech on target**

Over 100 students from across London who are currently taking ICT or computing at GCSE level have been offered a glimpse of working life in the sector through the Next Tech Girls initiative.

They have been given placements at companies including Virgin Money, Hive, Aberdeen Asset Management, Softwire, VE Interactive, and Telefónica's start-up accelerator, Wayra.

Next Tech, the brainchild of specialist global technology recruitment consultancy Empiric, was launched with the aim of inspiring 5,000 more women to pursue careers in technology in the UK by 2020.

In response to dwindling numbers of women in the tech sector – with only 17 percent of the workforce made up of females – the Next Tech Girls campaign is working with education institutions and employers to place girls into relevant work experience. The initiative is supported by working groups and bodies including TechUK, Tech London Advocates and the Greater London Authority.

Steve Brown, Program Manager at Next Tech Girls and Director at Empiric, commented: "I am delighted, although not altogether surprised, that this initiative has already been such a success. The talent shortages that the tech and digital sectors are facing are intrinsically linked with female under-representation, and we are not alone in seeking a solution to this challenge. I am pleased to report that interest from clients looking to host students has been greater than we had ever anticipated."

### **Calmness and confidence are keys to success**

People need to approach difficult situations with composure and execute their response with calm confidence, Amy Cudy, Social Psychologist and Professor at Harvard Business School, told the Society for Human Resource Management annual conference in Washington, DC.

Paul Loftus, who attended the event, told *Industrial and Commercial Training*: "According to Dr Cudy, having presence is equivalent to being attuned to and able to express one's boldest self. She informed her audience that presence reveals itself when people believe their story, convey confidence without arrogance and communicate harmoniously. Arrogance, in contrast, is a wall people put up to prevent others from challenging them."

Powerlessness prevents people from being present in the moment as it leads to inhibition. People's behavior-inhibition system causes them to shut down and become risk averse. A sense of power, in contrast, makes people feel hopeful about themselves and others.

Paul Loftus reported that Amy Cudy emphasized the importance of posture. Expansion of the chest indicates power, in humans and others in the animal kingdom. Gymnasts, for example, show pride and power in their postures. New Zealand's All Blacks rugby union team performs the ceremonial Haka dance before its matches to intimidate the opposition and give team members a sense of power.

With powerlessness, in contrast, people hide their faces, lower their shoulders and "wrap" themselves so they look smaller. Animals do the same. Dogs, for example, put their tails between their legs.

Amy Cudy indicated that it was particularly important to have confidence when going for an interview. People can practise high-power poses in advance of the event to give themselves confidence. People who adopt powerful postures can even endure pain better.

Amy Cudy said that the more people gesture when they are telling their story the more compelling they are. However, gestures should be relevant and appropriate.

Mike Rowe, host of the Discovery Channel television program *Dirty Jobs*, spoke about the benefits of hard work and how it affects national identity, infrastructure and the economy. He said there are 5.8 million jobs in the USA that nobody wants.

### **Mind Click drives training efficiency at National Express**

UK coach operator National Express has teamed up with Totara learning management system platinum partner Mind Click to implement its first learning management system, supporting learners across the nation.

Training delivery at National Express was previously complex, with content in different locations and displayed in digital and paper-based formats. Without a system to track learner progress on the road, it proved difficult for the organization to consistently train its coach drivers.

Mind Click was selected to implement National Express's first ever learning management system. James Rutter, the company's Head of Learning and Development, commented: "We wanted a supplier that we could really partner and build a relationship with, and we instantly got along with the team at Mind Click."

The system enables remote learners to complete performance reviews and e-learning on the road, on their own devices, saving time that would have previously taken them away from their daily operations.

"A key benefit for us is that our learners can access the system on multiple devices; our drivers out on the road can now complete training and development reviews in their own time and on their own mobile devices, which has been really positive for us," James Rutter continued.

National Express employees have saved time by streamlining resources in one place as well as organizing and modernizing their approach to training delivery.

### **Yachting challenge transforms young lives**

Online learning provider Virtual College is helping Hull-based charity CatZero to equip young people with the skills, belief and attitudes to help them to move on in the world.

CatZero has expert staff delivering projects for young people who have lost their way. The programs take young people outside their comfort zone to complete a number of tasks. They include training sessions, an introduction to employment and education opportunities, and links to local community groups.

They culminate in a sailing challenge on board a 72 ft challenge-racing yacht as a full crew member. This enables each young person to demonstrate an ability to work alongside local business and community leaders as an equal and has helped to transform the lives of hundreds of young people.

Abby Dacres, General Manager of Virtual College's safeguarding e-academy, who joined the crew for a recent voyage, commented: "I saw a group of people try their hardest and swell with pride when they realized they could do what they never dreamed possible, from pulling down a sail in high winds to cooking for 15 when the boat was heeling over so far you could see the waves through the kitchen skylight. They left with a new-found hope that anything was achievable and a real determination to make some changes to get them back into work and away from all the things that were holding them back."

Virtual College has given £500 to CatZero to support the work plus 50 online courses to help to improve the employability prospects of young unemployed people from Humberside.

Working with local safeguarding boards, the statutory agencies responsible for child protection at a local level, Virtual College has developed more than 40 online safeguarding and child protection courses used by individuals, charities, schools, hospitals, private businesses, the police and local government.

### **Learning and development (L&D) failing to deliver**

Most businesses question the effectiveness of their L&D strategies in meeting business goals, according to a recent study.

Brandon Hall Group's "State of learning and development 2016: ready to evolve" surveyed almost 500 small, medium and large organizations in 22 countries and across 35 industries to develop a picture of the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities for businesses from an L&D perspective.

The report reveals that organizations around the globe are struggling to develop a robust L&D strategy that has a genuine impact on business performance. In addition to finding that two thirds of companies doubt the effectiveness of their L&D strategies, the study also reveals that nearly 15 percent of businesses have no L&D strategy to speak of at all.

“This challenge leaves many companies without the guidance necessary to design, develop and deliver effective learning programs that boost individual and organizational performance,” said David Wentworth, the report’s author and principal learning analyst at BHG.

The report covers:

- What businesses consider to be the most critical learning initiatives for achieving business goals?
- What actions and approaches high-performing organizations take to build the best, most effective learning programs?
- Why most companies are not confident that their learning strategies are effective?
- How blended-learning approaches consistently achieve better learning and business outcomes for organizations?
- Why 93 percent of organizations view improving organizational performance as the most critical learning outcome for their business – and why so many fail to link learning and business objectives.

Additionally, the report covers the fact that most companies have learning strategies that are ineffective at improving business performance. “For these companies, a lot of the time, money and energy spent designing and delivering learning is for nothing,” David Wentworth explained. “As organizations continue to struggle with determining the return on investment for learning, this is a troubling sign.”

### **Nintex finds the right solution**

With more than 13,044 enrolled users and a 30 percent year-on-year growth rate, workflow technology company Nintex needed a learning management system capable of managing internal growth while enabling customer and partner networks.

By connecting other business applications like Sharepoint, Microsoft Office 365 and Salesforce, Nintex simplifies and streamlines company workflows. Because of this, Nintex product training must include both information about the Nintex product and resources used with it. With more than 10,000 partner-channel users, Nintex needed a learning management system capable of streaming various forms of content with numerous access points.

Technical-training manager Erick Weitkamp explained: “I needed something that could handle assessments and large groups of people. The company has worked with more than 5,000 partners in the last five years alone. On top of that, we needed something that we could use to log people in, or enable them to join the learning management system on their own.”

Content variety is good in theory but can be challenging to organize in practice. It can also be difficult to maintain learning accountability without the right tools. Docebo’s coach-and-share application offers Nintex separate portals to connect with partners and employees by offering informal tips and tricks and a question-and-answer model for product training.

With such varied and extensive training activities, Nintex requires advanced reporting to monitor and understand progress and success. “We can look at our reports and understand who has taken every course, and who has passed every examination, so we can look at a user and say, ‘he’s ready, he’s serious,’” Erick Weitkamp explained.

### **UK Rail Academy launches new apprenticeship standard**

The National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR), in partnership with Siemens, South West Trains (SWT) and Fareham Cemast, is among the first to have adopted the Rail Engineering Technician Trailblazer apprenticeship standard.

The new standard forms part of the Siemens-SWT apprentice training program, now in its third year.

Developed over two years by industry employers, including Transport for London, Network Rail, SWT and Siemens, the standard aims to provide apprentices with technical, professional and occupational competence in rail engineering.

The three-stage training program will teach apprentices the fundamentals of engineering while also covering advanced subjects including project management and rail-specific units such as passenger comfort and traction conversion. The final stage will place apprentices in the workplace, where they will develop further business-specific skills and complete their end-point assessment.

Dan Walker, Head of Apprenticeship Delivery at NTAR, said: "The Siemens-SWT program has grown over the years, and the introduction of the new standard has enabled us to take it to the next level. The learning experience that these organizations now offer together is powerful. It sets the standard for collaboration and apprenticeship training in the industry."

Rob Hulson, Apprentice and Graduate Manager at SWT, said: "Our partnership has led to amazing results so far and it is something I am really proud to be a part of. With the demands of modern trains and new technology, the next generation of engineers needs to be trained to the highest possible level. Through this partnership our apprentices have the chance to build an exciting and fulfilling career in an ever-changing industry."

Steve Dingsdale, Managing Director at Cemast, the Fareham College Center of Excellence in Engineering, Manufacturing and Advanced Skills Training, said: "We passionately believe that the development of young people, with the right engineering skills and knowledge, is essential for the future economic prosperity of the UK. The development of our partnership with Siemens and SWT has been very successful. We look forward to working with them on the new apprenticeship standard to ensure it fills the emerging skills gaps and produces the highly skilled technicians required in the rail industry, too."