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National Apprenticeship Week prompts brands to promote programs

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Bentley apprentices at work in the tool room

By KAYSORIN

National Apprenticeship Week in the United Kingdom gives many brands the chance to introduce or promote their apprenticeship programs and raise awareness about the benefits of apprenticeships for businesses, individuals and the economy.

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Luxury Daily

This year, the nation will be celebrating from March 9-13, and brands such as automaker Bentley Motors and hotelier The Dorchester are announcing new opportunities for prospective apprentices. Apprenticeship programs have been shown to benefit employers by providing eager, new trainees as well as allowing the apprentices themselves to learn on the job while earning a salary.

"I think it's a great opportunity for everyone," said Rania Sedhom, managing partner at [Sedhom & Mayhew](#), Pllc., New York. "One the of the best things is that there is always a gap between education and practical skills. You go to school to learn things but not necessarily how to apply them.

"With apprenticeships you are able to teach people the way you want them to do things," she said. "You have complete control over how things are produced.

“There is a learning curve but by the time [the apprentices] graduate they will be more adept at doing what you want them to do than someone who didn’t go to the apprenticeship program.”

Learning curve

Automaker Bentley recently announced that it will be accepting more apprentices in 2015 than it has in the past 25 years. The majority of these new apprentices will be accepted into the manufacturing program where they will learn to work with materials leather, wood and paint and develop mechanical and electrical engineering skills.



Bentley's apprenticeship is an ideal way for young people to join the brand

Bentley’s apprenticeship program combines a dual system of education and hands on experience. Approximately 70 percent of time is devoted to practical learning, while 30 percent is spent on theoretical study in a specific area.

The company will begin recruiting for the 63 available positions in September. Having a comprehensive apprenticeship program allows future employees to learn the skills needed to succeed on the job while at the same time working to earn money.



The Dorchester Collection's apprenticeship is available at locations around the world

Also, the Dorchester Collection announced new apprenticeship opportunities by posting

on its Facebook page and linking to a number of available applications. The hotel chain will also be participating in an Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair at the University of West London.

Initial investment

Many brands seek new apprentices throughout the year. For example, Swatch group's Glashütte Original is currently expanding its apprenticeship program to 28 new students at the Alfred Helwig School of Watchmaking in Germany.

With a total of 70 students across the three years of the watchmaking school, Glashütte Original is responding to a demand for skilled specialists by educating aspiring watchmakers. The apprenticeship program indicates the brand's commitment to expanding the world of exquisitely made watches ([see story](#)).

Other brands capitalize on young talent by funding educational programs. Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton is helping to train the engineers of tomorrow by participating in the Ecole Centrale Paris engineering school's Supply Chain management chair.

Specialists from LVMH brands, as well as companies Carrefour, Safran and Sanofi, will be involved in the Industrial Engineering curriculum at the school, and will also provide hands-on training through internships. Luxury brands often have trouble finding the right talent to fill particular roles, so this partnership will begin to develop long-term relationships with those who might be able to work with the conglomerate in the future ([see story](#)).

Regardless of how they go about it, it is beneficial for brands to support young professionals who are interested in joining their field. Apprenticeship is very much a two-way street that has incentives for both parties involved.

"We all go through this," Ms. Sedhom said. "The transition between jobs requires learning.

"We have to learn how different things are made," she said. "It's great for both the company and the person to get in from the ground up.

"You will never get better training than from the company you are working for. I think it's a win-win."

Final Take

Kay Sorin, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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