

THE PROVIDER INSIDER

INSIGHTS INTO FURTHER EDUCATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY BOOT CONSTRUCTION

Hi, my name is Bradley Longford and I work as a Trainee Business & Marketing Assistant for Henry Boot Construction in Dronfield. I am currently in the second year of my degree studying Professional Practice in Management at Sheffield Hallam University. I am also Chair of the Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network in Yorkshire and Humber.

SO HOW IS IT GOING?

Very well, thanks. I had some good news last week as I found out I'd been shortlisted at Sheffield Hallam University's Inspirational Student Awards so I spent the weekend celebrating!

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT SITUATION? – HAVE YOU BEEN FURLOUGHED, STILL WORKING OR WORKING FROM HOME?

I've been working from home since our office closed back in March. I am lucky enough to have a desk in my bedroom already so the transition to working from home has been relatively easy. I must admit I am enjoying the benefits of not having to travel 40 minutes to work every morning and I'm making use of the additional time at home by doing 30 minute workouts during my lunch breaks.

WHAT LEARNING ARE YOU DOING AS PART OF YOUR APPRENTICESHIP DURING THIS TIME?

I have been able to focus much more of my time on my degree and have set up a plan with my manager to attain my Knowledge Skills and Behaviours (KSBs). The plan includes being more involved in management meetings as I learn more about the operations of the business, and I hope to continue fulfilling these KSBs when normality returns.

HOW IS YOUR APPRENTICESHIP BEING DELIVERED REMOTELY – ARE YOU DOING ACTIVITIES, TUTORIALS, ASSIGNMENTS OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

Yes, just before lockdown I was lucky enough to go into university to do our finance module and I completed the assignment during the lockdown. Last week I completed my first virtual learning module on supply chain management which was delivered through the university's own application, Blackboard. I found the delivery was spot on and worked really well considering the situation. The full days were really heavy though and it doesn't help having to work from my bedroom!

DO YOU ENJOY LEARNING THIS REMOTE WAY? - WERE YOU SET UP ADEQUATELY FOR WORK OR DID YOU COMPANY HAVE TO SUPPLY EQUIPMENT?

Henry Boot have done everything to make working from home comfortable and easy – I have been provided with a laptop, docking station and additional monitor and all meetings are taken via Microsoft Teams which is great. However, when it comes to remote learning from home, it can be quite laborious so I'm looking forward to the day we can return to the classroom.

WHEN THINGS GO BACK TO NORMAL WOULD YOU STILL LIKE TO SEE A BLENDED APPROACH TO YOUR APPRENTICESHIP (PART REMOTE/PART FACE TO FACE)?

I think it could be good to embrace being more open to technology and new ways of working. However, I personally still think that in specific scenarios, being face-to-face has bigger benefits.

FROM WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT DURING THIS SITUATION SO FAR, DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE ONCE YOU GET BACK TO THE WORKPLACE?

During the lockdown, I have had to find new ways of organising my workload and have discovered that sometimes I lack confidence and underestimate my own ability to perform new tasks, although I am taking more time for self-reflection to help with my personal development. This period has also given me more time to do training, so I've recently improved my Excel skills and this has helped implement some process improvements to previously more time-consuming tasks.

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR PROGRAMME FOR WHEN YOU ARE WORKING FROM HOME?

I feel the organisation of the course has been improved and some of my other coursemates have said they prefer the online learning when it comes to asking questions, as there is less pressure than in a classroom environment.

DURING THIS TIME HAVE YOU MAINTAINED SAME TUTOR/ASSESSOR, OR HAVE YOU BEEN ALLOCATED A NEW TUTOR/ASSESSOR?

I have maintained the same tutor throughout this year.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ABOUT YOUR APPRENTICESHIP – NEXT STEPS, CAREER PROGRESSION?

I feel really lucky to be able to further my education at university, and following discussions with Henry Boot I was able to pick a course that best suits my role and future ambitions. Henry Boot continues to support me throughout my apprenticeship in my aspiration to become a Business Development Manager.

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