Moving on up ! - Careers Special - Business Sector

Welcome to our newest newsletter, dedicated to career education, information, advice, and guidance for those in the Business Sector.

Working in the business sector offers numerous benefits, including opportunities for career growth, financial stability, and professional development. It provides a dynamic environment where you can acquire a diverse skill set, from management and leadership to finance and marketing. The business sector also offers competitive salaries, benefits, and the potential for performance-based rewards. Moreover, it allows you to network with professionals across industries, gaining valuable connections that can open doors to new opportunities



In the 2023/24 academic year, there were 22,200 apprenticeship starts in the Business, Administration, and Law sector in England.

This sector remains the most popular for degree apprenticeships, accounting for 47% of all level 6 and level 7 apprenticeships in 2022/23. However, the overall number of apprenticeship starts has declined in recent years, with a 3% decrease from the previous year.

In this newsletter, we will explore career opportunities within the sector, highlight available professional memberships available, and share a learner's testimony about their experience on the Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeship. A big congratulations to Julie for achieving a Distinction Grade, and a heartfelt thank you for sharing your learning journey with us.

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Reflection - My personal experience of CEIAG and top tips for Career Development



by Helen Devey

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is now rightly rising up the agenda to be a top priority for Schools, Colleges , ILP'S and Further Education Establishments. However this hasn't always been the case and 25 years ago this support was actually pretty limited and most school leavers or young adults were put through a one size fits all careers programme and sent on their way. It meant lots of young people like me were leaving full time education unequipped to make positive decisions about our careers.

I have worked in both the public and private business sector since leaving University at the age of 20. Completing a HND in Sports Science for two years I then decided I was ready to work but I had no idea what I wanted to do as a career. I had a new qualification but no idea what I could do with it. The careers advice and guidance was unexpectedly none existent from my University and I found myself doing some Administration Support Work with West Midlands Fire Service. For a number of years I learnt the fundamentals of Business Administration in what was a large complex public sector organisation. Opportunities to progress within WMFS were few and far between due to public sector cuts at that time and in a turn of fate I was asked to come and interview to do a bit of admin work for SCT in 2011. I was the first employed member of our organisation

Fast Forward 14 years and I am now the Business Manager at SCT responsible for daily operations. We have grown from a team of 5 to 45 employed members of staff and we hold our own Direct Apprenticeship and Adult Learning Contracts.

Despite not receiving the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance I now know I should have received from my University - there were things I was able to do for myself to help my development and growth. These key things were

- Setting clear career goals - Identifying where you want to be in 3 to 5 years and and identify what skills or qualifications you need to get there,
- Gain Relevant Qualifications - I undertook Leadership and Management qualifications which taught me new knowledge and skills I could apply to my role.
- Develop Key Business and Leadership skills. Problem solving, leadership , communication , negotiation. Digital and Data Skills are key to many business roles also.
- Master effective communication - strong written and verbal skills are essential. Even if your English writing skills are not great there is spell checkers and IT Support systems such as AI to now help with this enabling you to proof read all of your work.
- Gain leadership experience- take on leadership roles in small projects or speak to your manager to volunteer to be involved in projects that are happening.
- Find a mentor in your organisation who can provide guidance and support. This can be invaluable to your development. Mine taught me some very important life skills!
- Stay informed on industry trends - either by attending industry events , seminars or linking with organisations and professional bodies on websites like LinkedIn.
- Explore Career Progression opportunities - Look at promotion opportunities within your organisation. Show initiative and commitment to your development, if growth is limited - have a discussion with your seniors about your career aspirations and where you want to be - you never know what opportunities could come from this.

I have learnt so far in my career that it is important to be open to new opportunities that come your way. There are so many sectors and industries out there where your skills are transferrable to. The world really is your oyster (cheesey) If you want to make a change to your career you need to be proactive about it. You are in the driving seat.

Careers IAG will be regularly discussed on your Apprenticeship so be sure to take advantage of your trainers knowledge

Professional Membership - Why?

If you are employed in the Business Sector in the UK, there are several important professional organisations or groups that you might want to consider joining. These organisations can provide you with valuable resources, networking opportunities, and professional development.

Joining these organisations can provide you with networking and professional connections, building relationships that can lead to job opportunities. You can also achieve industry recognition and creditability for example Chartered Management Institute, CIPD and ICEAW just to name a few and they are highly valued by employers.

Professional bodies are able to offer exclusive training , workshops and news letters which are great for keeping in touch with industry trends, regulatory changes and best practice.

Aswell as providing access to job opportunities and career coaching programmes - having membership can give you the edge in job applications as it is looked on very favourably by employers.

Before joining any Professional Bodies ensure you research and identify the most suitable for you and your sector. It might be helpful to talk to your employer.

We have documented below some of the most popular Memberships available in the UK. Click on the logo to access their website and learn more about what they can offer.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - The UK's main body for HR and people management professionals.

CIPD

CMI Chartered Management Institute

Chartered Management Institute - Recognition of Managers with exceptional leadership skills

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is a global accountancy body that's for people who want to become professional accountants

ACCA

British Chambers of Commerce

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) - Provides business support, networking, and lobbying for companies of all sizes.

Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) - Represents the UK's recruitment industry.

REC

CIM The Chartered Institute of Marketing

Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) - Provides marketing qualifications, training, and networking.

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Student Spotlight

rutland house community trust

Learner Journey Testimony

"I decided to do the Level 7 Senior Leader course purely because I hadn't undertaken any qualifications for some time & the content looked interesting. Completing the Level 7 Senior Leader qualification has been a truly game changing journey for me. It has not only equipped me with the strategic and operational skills needed for senior leadership but has also greatly impacted my personal and professional growth.



The course content was incredibly thorough, covering everything from strategic management & financial acumen to leadership & communication. Each module was thoughtfully designed, providing me with deep insights and practical knowledge that I could immediately apply in my role.



One of the aspects I appreciated most was how the theory could be applied to practical application & the opportunities to do this as part of the assignments. Beyond the professional skills, this qualification has significantly contributed to my personal development. It has enhanced my critical thinking, communication, and leadership abilities, making me a more effective and confident leader.



I received exceptional support and guidance of my assessors, Tracy Glass & Leslie Woodstock, their expertise and dedication played a crucial role in my success at gaining a distinction. Throughout the qualification, they were always accessible and responsive, whether it was through scheduled sessions or impromptu queries. They were also a constant source of encouragement and support guiding me through challenges and taking the time to understand my strengths, areas for improvement offering constructive advice. I am deeply grateful for their contributions and support.



I wholeheartedly recommend the Level 7 Senior Leader qualification to anyone looking to elevate their leadership skills and career. The knowledge and experiences gained from this program are truly invaluable and have improved my confidence and competence to navigate the complexities of senior leadership.



I would also recommend SCT; the excellent assessors provide expert guidance, personalised feedback, and unwavering support which make the learning experience truly informative and enjoyable."



Julie Dawson - Operations Manager
Rutland House
Senior Leader Level 7 - Distinction
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Trainer Spotlight



Within this special Business Careers Newsletter I interviewed two of our own trainers about their own experiences in the Business Sector and what they enjoy about their roles at SCT.

Leslie Woodstock
Business Skills Trainer

Tracey Glass
Business Skills Curriculum lead

Q: What kind of businesses or industries have you worked in, and how have those experiences shaped your understanding of business operations?

Les - I initially worked within the electronics and engineering sectors, involved in various roles within car component manufacturing, and then moved into the mobile phone repair industry, in which I have over 20 years' experience. This was mainly within retail environments, so working in shops, opening repair centers and establishing the brands of some of the, then well know Mobile Phone stores in the UK. On the Public Sector

Tracey - For 30 years, I worked at McDonald's as a General Manager, responsible for all aspects of running a £1.5 million restaurant. My role encompassed recruitment, marketing, sales, operations, profits, quality assurance, staff development, training, and adherence to legislative requirements. Beyond my core responsibilities, I also conducted quality and food audit checks across the business. Attending both internal and external training courses expanded my skillset, equipping me with valuable transferable skills that I now apply to my current role.

Q: Were you involved in mentoring, training, or leading teams in your earlier roles? How did those experiences prepare you for this role?

A. Mainly within the retail sector, I inherited the role of training on both the physical aspects of repairs, also the written and team building sides of the companies I worked in. I would go out of my way to ensure that every staff member within the stores was trained to provide above average customer service. These experiences helped me prepare for this role as a trainer because I found that it was natural for me to try my utmost to bring out the best in everyone that I worked with. I truly believe that everybody can achieve more if they set goals and aim to be better at the job that they do.

A: Yes, I led multiple teams within the restaurant, which eventually led to my involvement in the education and training sector. As part of the education team, I facilitated development sessions and training days at head office, ensuring consistent business standards. I found great fulfillment in training and developing others, realizing it was a natural fit for me. Seeing the direct benefits of my training on employees' performance and confidence reinforced my passion for education.

Q: What inspired you to transition from working in the business sector to becoming a trainer/assessor?

A. It was a natural progression to move from the business sector and then being a trainer because there is more of a focus on getting people with little or no skills in the area, or maybe new in a company, to helping them develop within their apprenticeship. Seeing that growth helps guide them to achieve better outcomes within their roles.

A: My passion for training and development made the transition into teaching business qualifications feel natural. I had already taken the time to complete my Assessor and PTLLS qualifications at college, which equipped me with the necessary tools for a career in education.

Q: How do you stay updated with current trends and practices in the business world to ensure your teaching remains relevant?

A. I stay updated with current trends and practices in the business world by reading journals, websites and subscribing to various business websites and blogs. Making sure that my knowledge is kept up to date with the SCTV sessions that we have with all the tutors on a weekly basis. This helps to grow and keep my knowledge fresh.

A. I actively research and write course content, which keeps me engaged with the latest business trends. This process enhances my knowledge and allows me to incorporate up-to-date industry insights into my teaching. Staying informed ensures that my learners receive relevant and practical knowledge that aligns with modern business practices.

Q: What are some of the most valuable lessons you've learned from your career that you now pass on to your learners?

A. One of the most valuable lessons that I've learned in my career is that you have to be yourself and not let anybody hold you back, as long as you are doing the right thing.
I was once told by someone in my managerial career that I'm 'not actually a manager'. This is because I had a different style, and approach of dealing with people, situations and problems. I'd always try to find the right outcome and ensure that I kept staff retention high.
I use this example to talk to my learners, that they can still progress within their company, take on new roles and positions, even if at first, they're not confident.

A. I always tell my learners that nothing is unachievable—if you want something, you can make it happen. Confidence and self-belief are key. I also emphasize the importance of taking responsibility for your actions, as it demonstrates strength and professionalism. These values help learners develop both personally and professionally



Q: What advice would you give to someone in the business sector who's considering becoming a trainer or assessor?

A. If someone has got the right amount of experience or even limited experience and would like to 'Dip their toe' into being a trainer or assessor I would suggest doing some research into what the role entails and then applying for suitable vacancies. One of the most valuable things I feel that you can have is experience, because you can share the good and bad experiences with the learners. So even if you haven't got the qualifications, many training providers like SCT will help you with your CPD and can continue to help you grow within the business.

A. If you enjoy developing others and applying your knowledge and skills, teaching and assessing could be a great career move. While there will be challenges, you will learn to manage people and their unique needs in different ways. The most rewarding part is building strong relationships with learners and witnessing their growth—knowing that you played a part in their success is truly fulfilling

A heartfelt thank you to both Tracey and Les for generously sharing their insights into their roles and experiences in further education.

The Impact of Technology, AI, and Automation on UK Business Operations











In today's fast-changing business world, technology, AI, and automation are transforming the way companies operate. For apprentices on business qualifications, understanding these changes is essential for future career success

Increased Efficiency & Productivity

Businesses across the UK are using automation to speed up repetitive tasks like data entry, payroll, and customer service. AI-powered chatbots, for example, are handling customer queries 24/7, freeing up employees to focus on higher-value tasks. This improves efficiency and reduces costs.

Changing Job Roles & Skills Demand

As automation takes over routine tasks, employers are looking for workers with digital skills, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability. Apprentices need to be comfortable using business software, AI tools, and data analysis to stay competitive in the job market.

Enhanced Decision-Making with AI

AI helps businesses make better decisions by analysing large amounts of data quickly. From predicting sales trends to improving supply chains, AI-driven insights allow companies to operate more effectively. Learning how to use AI tools can give apprentices a valuable edge in their careers

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The Rise of Remote & Hybrid Work

Technology has made remote and hybrid working more common. Cloud-based systems, video conferencing, and project management tools allow employees to collaborate from anywhere. Understanding these technologies is becoming a key skill for future business professionals.

Sustainability & Innovation

Businesses are also using technology to become more sustainable. Automation reduces waste in manufacturing, and AI helps companies track their carbon footprint. As businesses focus more on sustainability, knowledge of these technologies will be crucial

.

To stay ahead, individuals in the Business Sector should develop digital literacy, embrace lifelong learning, and gain hands-on experience with emerging business technologies. Those who adapt to this technological shift will have more opportunities and a strong career path.

For further details regarding our Business Apprenticeship Opportunities, please contact our Business Development Team at 0121 240 3989. Discover how Business Apprenticeships can revolutionise your organisation.

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