



Visit Isle of Wight
**VISITOR ECONOMY
CONFERENCE**

A skilled workforce for your business

Rachael Randall
Founder and Chief Executive of HTP
Apprenticeship College

- A SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR YOUR BUSINESS AND HOW IT CAN HELP YOU
 - Rachael Randall
 - Founder and CEO HTP Apprenticeship College
 - Chair Solent Partners (LEP)

- **So lets start with where we are:**
- People 1st International's '*state of the workforce 2023*' report
- 84% of employers said they experienced difficulties filling vacancies in past 12 months
- 84% said they experienced challenges in retaining staff with some estimating annual staff turnover to be as high as 75%
- Only 37% of employers feel the training and development they offer fully meets the skills needs of employees.

- People 1st International's research highlights the need to prioritise leadership and management skills to help businesses recruit, retain and develop employees more effectively and to take action to close skills gaps.
- The **'accidental manager'**
- *"People are being promoted to retain them without upskilling. Others are being upskilled before the business is ready to fill positions. Both setting people up to fail. I worry we frequently devalue our industry by doing this." - Visitor economy employer*

- **The top five challenges facing employers are:**
- Recruiting appropriately skilled staff
- Keeping up with technological advances
- Attracting a diverse workforce
- Retaining valued staff
- Developing a workforce equipped to meet environmental sustainability demands.

- A focus on retaining staff and offering the best quality employment experience can help reduce churn and address the recruitment challenge through greater investment in employee engagement, training and development.
- Addressing the impact of the ‘accidental manager’ with no formal management and leadership training is imperative in addressing this challenge. A recent study by the Chartered Management Institute demonstrated the significance of the problem with ‘accidental managers’ contributing to almost one in three workers quitting. Providing training that gives individuals the skills needed to effectively recruit, retain and motivate employees and ensuring that promotions are not just based on technical competence but also take into account behaviours and other key leadership traits is crucial to improve retention and productivity

Effective approaches being adopted by employers include:

- Changing advertising style to match what prospective colleagues are looking for, digital advertisements focusing on the realities of the job. Offering more job experience as part of recruitment.
- Looking at what benefits can be provided to attract different demographics such as examining work/life balance preferences (i.e. non-standard hours and how childcare responsibilities influence desired working schedules/flexibility) and advertising to professionals in other sectors that offer similar opportunities

- Offering reskilling programmes to target women returners and older workers.
- Using internships, graduate positions and apprenticeships.
- Leaning on charity sector to reach into disengaged communities.
- Rewards perks and incentives
- Improving employee experience
- Clearer career pathways and development opportunities

- **Training and Development:**
- **Challenges:** Insufficient time and staffing challenges are the biggest training challenge for organisations, with backfilling the time needed to train staff raised as a cost and time issue. A number of businesses also point to a lack of funding and a lack of knowledge of the available training and education pathways.

- 63% of employers do not believe the training and development opportunities they offer fully meet the skills needs of employees
- only 31% feel there are clear career progression routes in their organisation
- Methods employers are finding most effective:
- Internal training, external training, shadowing, coaching and mentoring

- **Methods employers would like to use more:**
- Apprenticeships
- Professional qualifications
- 58% of employers signpost to career pathways and progression opportunities through apprenticeships
- *However:* 64% of employees would like more exhibility in the use of the apprenticeship levy.

- *"Broadening the use of the apprenticeship levy funds should be considered to pay for other training not just apprenticeships, to a certain percentage for example."* - Visitor economy employer
- *"I would like to see more apprenticeships available that support the needs of the visitor attraction operations side of the sector that focus on creating a world-class visitor experience, managing the visitor journey and responsible tourism etc."* - Visitor economy employer

- **Viewpoints from employers on approaches and solutions include:**
- There's a need for better linking up the system with industry inserting itself into college planning to make the case for targeted courses and direct promotion to students about career opportunities.
- Bespoke, modular courses should be on offer that fill skills shortages and meet the workforce needs of the industry.
- The learning and development offer should be refocused around digital skills development via on-the-job learning through role-based scenarios. This will encourage peer mentoring to target apparent skills gaps.

- It's imperative to focus on digital, green and social skills to take advantage of innovation and spur productivity growth.
- Short pre-employment programmes focused on industry orientation and core / soft skills aimed at youth, adults, and marginalised groups will help provide industry with a pipeline of talent armed with the skills industry needs.
- The learning and development offer is largely digital, or sometimes hybrid – the medium doesn't always reflect skills need. In a people-centric industry, face-to-face learning helps nurture social skills and behaviours and critical thinking.
- The benefits of an apprenticeship need to be better promoted. There are fantastic success stories which can help improve the appeal of the apprenticeships as a route into the sector.

- Apprenticeships are an effective option and help build confidence in both digital and interpersonal skills, but Maths and English requirements still stand out as a significant barrier to many, opening this up would support more people and improve social mobility.
- The tendency to pay apprentices the minimum wage can present further issues. Paying apprentices properly would encourage participation in schemes and see apprentices recognised as valued colleagues.

- ***Linking with new Local Visitor Economy Partnerships which aim to support and grow the visitor economy can also help employers to access targeted business support***

- We need the LVEP to develop an **Isle of Wight Tourism Skills Strategy** which would then influence the regional economic strategy.
- There will be IOW specific issues
- Need IOW employers to come together to support the LVEP with what they need especially around the apprenticeship levy.