

# Building a sustainable future workforce through apprenticeships



MX Construction is a London-based specialist subcontractor, managing four to six live sites at any one time. Like many employers in the sector, they are contending with a tightening labour market, where skilled workers are harder to find, and fewer people are choosing construction as a career.

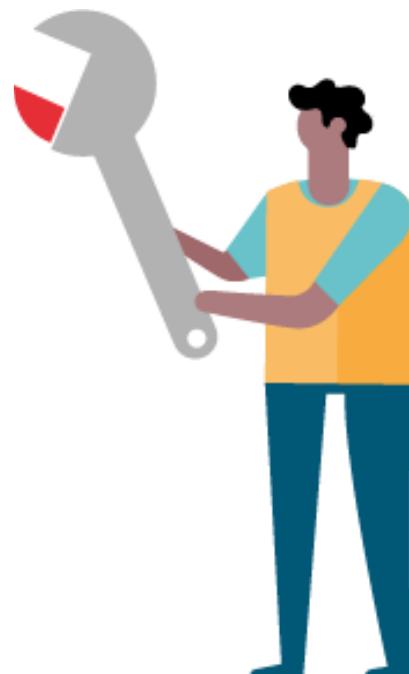
Recognising that it needed a more sustainable way to attract, develop, and retain talent, MX Construction

introduced its first apprenticeship in 2025 – a Level 3 Construction Support Technician – as part of a new strategy to build a **long-term pipeline of skilled employees**.

## Why MX Construction made it an apprenticeship

Initially, MX Construction **simply had a role they needed to fill** and weren't sure where to start. When they explored different options, apprenticeships quickly emerged as the strongest route – offering a way to meet their staffing need while also supporting long-term workforce development. As they looked into the model, several benefits became clear:

- **A sustainable talent pipeline:** apprenticeships offer a structured route to **develop people over time, rather than repeatedly recruiting for short-term roles** in a competitive labour market.
- **Training people their way:** MX Construction is able to shape the apprentice's development around their



methods, standards, and **company ethos** – building the exact skills the business needs.

- **A pathway to future leadership:** the apprenticeship is designed with **progression** in mind, with a clear ambition for the apprentice to grow into a project manager role.
- **Higher retention and cultural fit:** bringing someone in early and developing them internally builds **loyalty, commitment and a sense of belonging**.
- **A practical solution to recruitment challenges:** apprenticeships open up a **wider pool of candidates**, including young people who may not have considered construction but have the potential to thrive with the right support.
- **Strong financial incentives:** as a non-levy payer, MX Construction has the majority of training costs covered, and benefit from National Insurance exemptions for apprentices under 25, making the role more **affordable for a growing SME**.
- **Hands-on guidance:** [Workwhile](#), a registered charity that helps employers build successful apprenticeship programmes, provided practical support throughout the process - from identifying the right training provider and course, to navigating funding, incentives and paperwork.

## How MX Construction overcame challenges

Introducing apprenticeships into a busy construction SME is not without challenges. This was the company's first apprentice, and the apprenticeship landscape is complex and fast-changing. As a small team, they needed support to understand funding, find the right training provider and design a role that worked for both the business and the apprentice.

**Bernard Brennan, Director, is clear that they could not have done without Workwhile:**

“We could never have made this happen on our own. Apprenticeships are complicated, and

the right partner doesn't just guide you – they unlock opportunities you wouldn't reach otherwise, turning **something daunting into something achievable**".

## The impact so far

- **Cultural benefits:** The apprentice brings energy and enthusiasm that the team really values. **Because the company has invested in his development, he is highly committed, which supports retention.**
- **Upskilling the existing team:** Supporting an apprentice has strengthened the capabilities of the MX Construction's wider workforce. Team members have received training on mentoring and supporting early-career staff, helping them build **confidence, coaching skills and a stronger culture of learning** across the business.
- **Futureproofing the workforce:** MX Construction now plans to recruit **one new apprentice each year**. Over time, this will create a pipeline of skilled staff who understand the business from the ground up. They envisage the current apprentice becoming a **role model** and mentor for future apprentices, helping to embed a culture of learning and progression.
- **Supporting the sector:** With increasing client interest in apprenticeships across the supply chain, MX Construction's investment strengthens not only its internal workforce but also responds to wider sector expectations.



## MX Construction's advice for other employers

For employers considering making an entry-level role an apprenticeship, Director Bernard Brennan offers three key reflections:

- **Start with one role and build from there:** You don't need to overhaul your whole workforce strategy at once. Starting with a single apprenticeship can help you learn what works and build confidence.
- **Use work experience to test the fit:** It can be a low-risk way to identify potential apprentices and assess suitability.
- **Don't do it alone:** Partnering with organisations that understand apprenticeships saves time, reduces complexity and improve outcomes.



For MX Construction, apprenticeships are **no longer an experiment but a cornerstone of how they will grow**, evolve and strengthen their workforce for the future.