

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



Make it an Apprenticeship

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.