



# Advance

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## Welcome!

Welcome to the launch edition of 'Advance', our new quarterly Axia Solutions newsletter designed to keep you up to date with Axia news and, more importantly, to inspire you with the powerful changes our apprenticeships and training are making.

In this first issue we explore the importance of nurturing potential leaders and managers, highlighting the impact their development can have on your organisation's success and how "accidental managers" can become **essential** managers.

We also celebrate the exceptional achievements of our learners, showcasing their dedication and the remarkable outcomes they've achieved. Finally, we introduce you to one of our incredible team members, Tina, who shows her passion and commitment to developing future talent for businesses of all sizes.

I hope you'll enjoy reading,

*Victoria*



# Celebrating success: Axia apprentices accomplish amazing achievements!

**In the first quarter of this academic year we have some truly outstanding apprenticeship achievements to celebrate.**

18 Axia apprentices have completed their apprenticeships since August, with even more booked in for their end point assessment in the next few weeks.

Eight of them have reached the pinnacle of apprenticeships by gaining a Distinction grade. This continues Axia's trend from last year, where 50% of learners reached the highest possible grade. Additionally, two apprentices have earned a coveted Merit grade (only awarded on a limited number of apprenticeships) while the remaining four secured a well-deserved pass.

So we want to celebrate the fantastic achievements of: Martin Ecclestone, Isabelle McGough, Clare Moulton, Rebecca Price, Matt Edgerton, Jake Fallon-Farrington, David Holland, Ari Kurti, Harvey McCready, Jake Willington, Phoebe Bentley, Thomas Nicklin, Kevin Wilson, Geneve Gurr, Bradley Hibell, Andrew Andruskevicius, David Clucas and Jordanie Poole.

Of course we can't forget their supportive employers: Wedgwood (Fiskars), NVS; Steelite, Whistl, Surf & Turf Instant Shelters, Cheshire East Council, Leicester City Council, MacroArt, QPS, Senior Aerospace, Wincanton, Austerberry Estate Agents, Caudwell Children.

An apprenticeship achievement of any grade is the culmination of a lot of hard-work and commitment from both the apprentice, employer and trainer and we want to thank everyone involved in these excellent results.

**It has been wonderful to witness these apprentices grow and develop during their course and we hope that they will continue to grow and excel!**



# Management maybe's – Maybe it's time to invest

**The recent Chartered Management Institute and YouGov report – 'Why the UK needs better managers' really resonates with me.**

Leading and managing is difficult and diverse, I've always said you are social worker, operations and finance manager in one. We all recall managers who made a real difference in our lives and also some who made us dread Sundays.

Managers have such an impact on people and culture, both inside and outside the workplace. How many managers spend time deliberating on whether their skills are up to it, or how to handle tricky discussions, questioning their own abilities?

**Maybe** by developing our managers and leaders, we could achieve so much more, tangible business benefits to **productivity, culture and wellbeing**. My own humble view is that we don't invest enough time in developing better leaders and managers.

**Maybe** it has become acceptable to not invest. Terms like "accidental manager" suggest it is acceptable to not be trained. There are many stories regaled of employees who became team leaders or managers because they were good at what they did. According to CMI's survey this is 82% of managers. But imagine **if those 82%** were developed – that's a lot of potential impact.

**Maybe** it's time to **add value** to managers and team leaders. Whilst apprenticeships are not the answer to all training needs, they do go a good way to addressing issues. Degree apprenticeships have made some headway, but let's not kid ourselves that we should only be supporting high level leaders and managers. Succession planning is something I hear about from most business owners I meet, and it starts on the "Shop Floor".

### **What's stopping us?**

Like having a family, there is never a good time and there will always be business pressures, so let us stop putting it off. Adding value, giving time, creating a positive culture, learning from each other and sharing management tools and tips is something we can do right now.

Be prepared for a small investment. Most management apprentices take just a couple of off the job hours each week to study; the remaining time they are putting to practice and mastering skills in work. Using monthly 1:1s you can gauge impact and support their development.

Whatever the size of your business – if you have or are thinking of promoting someone to a team leader or manager role, stop for a second and think about how you could support them.

## ◀ Meet Tina!



**Tina Dawson delivers our business administration apprenticeships and is our apprenticeship team leader here at Axia Solutions.**

**Tina, how long have you been working in further education, and what changes have you seen?**

I have worked in further education since 1998 and joined the Axia team in October 2022, so 25 years in total. I've seen a lot of changes but the biggest thing has been how apprenticeships have evolved, there's a lot more teaching and support offered now and we work with the students to ensure they are ready for their endpoint assessment. The whole process is far more robust than previously.

**What is the most important thing for apprentices to learn?**

Professionalism and being able to communicate with people across the business both internally and externally, understanding about the laws that they must adhere to within work and making sure they are respectful to colleagues. We talk about how equality and diversity has evolved, plus health and safety and GDPR, and the importance of always delivering quality work across all areas of business.

**What impact have you seen the apprenticeships have with your learners?**

I see their confidence grow, their overall development and how they progress into other areas of the business. I always encourage my learners to find out what happens in other departments within the business, so they can see the bigger picture of how that business works. It's great to see the progression made from day one through to the successful completion of their apprenticeship, it's rewarding for us both.

**What sort of feedback do you get from employers at the end of the programme?**

They are always impressed with how the apprentice gets involved with more of the decision making within the business, and comment on how they are more proactive with making those decisions rather than having to check back all the time. Some employers report that their learners want to stretch their development further into different areas within the business, which is always great to hear as it cements their position within the company.

## let's talk Apprenticeships

**Emil Siedlich**

Chief Design Engineer  
Senior Aerospace  
BWT, recently  
promoted to a Design  
Manager position  
whilst undertaking  
a management  
apprenticeship.



**“These programmes have a hugely positive impact. A significant factor in this promotion was the changes in myself and implementing the knowledge I gained during my apprenticeship.”**



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