

# Young blood

**Hastee Pay CEO James Herbert shares his top tips for closing the growing skills gap by attracting younger workers to the sector**

**M**anufacturing businesses will be well aware of a growing skills gap. According to the British Chambers of Commerce's quarterly economic survey, 81% of manufacturers struggled to find skilled workers in 2018. There is growing concern over how to backfill roles vacated by an ageing workforce. Another recent report from YouGov found the ageing workforce is a concern for 75% of manufacturers.

Attracting younger workers will be crucial but given the sector's existing recruitment problem, it seems manufacturing isn't topping the list of sectors that young people want to work in. This could be down to a number of factors such as a sector-wide image problem, lack of understanding of the long term employment opportunities in manufacturing, or a poor range of workplace benefits that don't meet younger workers' expectations.

Here are four tips that could help to boost the sector's appeal to younger workers:

## 1. Shout about your innovations

The term 'digital natives' is commonly applied to young people because they have grown up surrounded by technology. Many young people entering the workforce won't know a time before smartphones existed and they're not content unless they have access to the latest and greatest technologies available. This is driven by consumer brands like Apple. Since the launch of the first iPhone in 2007, Apple has launched a new model with better tech every year.

Manufacturing is undoubtedly one of the most exciting sectors to watch when it comes to the adoption of new technologies. By promoting the exciting and cutting edge technologies that people entering the sector will work with, such as AI, automation and machine learning, manufacturing can boost its appeal.

But employers should also ensure they are providing technologies that directly impact daily working tasks too. Digital HR and workflow management platforms that replace paper based processes and employee benefits that can be accessed and managed from smartphones. This brings us to the next point...

## 2. Offer benefits that address workers' needs

When it comes to workplace benefits, the old standards simply don't cut it with younger workers. Basics such as cycle to work schemes, season ticket loans and paid holiday aren't seen as benefits but as basic expectations.

While matching Google's benefits package – that consists of free meals, massages and yoga classes – isn't exactly feasible in every business, there are smartphone apps that provide real value to younger workers for little to



**James Herbert**

no cost.

From empowering workers to manage their finances better to providing exclusive discounts on meals, shopping and leisure activities, employers can offer digital benefits that provide far better value to young workers than a massage at their desk. Employers should consider providing financial as part of the benefits package. This could include guidance on how to read payslips, how to budget and save and how to avoid and manage debt.

## 3. Embrace flexibility

Flexible working has been shown to increase productivity by providing a better work-life balance. By applying flexibility to other areas such as access to pay and training, companies can build a stronger, more productive workforce. Providing earnings on demand empowers workers to take better control of their finances by accessing their earned pay without having to wait for pay day. This allows workers to avoid resorting to high cost borrowing.

Hastee Pay research shows 78% of the UK's workers admit to relying on high cost credit options such as credit cards, overdrafts and payday loans to get by between pay

days. Earnings on demand offers a safe, responsible alternative when it comes to covering unanticipated expenses such as a vehicle repair or unexpected bill.

The research also uncovered that a quarter of the UK's workers have suffered from a lack of concentration at work due to their finances and 21% admits to managing personal debt repayments at work. Helping to increase financial wellbeing through earnings on demand will create a happier, more productive and workforce. Almost half (45%) of the working population would be more likely to stay with an employer who offers flexible payment.

#### 4. Highlight career opportunities

Long gone are the days when people stepped into a job after their studies and stayed in it until they received their golden watch. Research from LV= suggests five years is the maximum amount of time a UK worker will spend in one job. Attracting and retaining workers can be made easier by simply highlighting the career opportunities within your business.

With the existing workforce ageing, there will be considerable opportunities for young workers to develop quickly in manufacturing careers and climb the career ladder. These opportunities should be amplified to attract younger workers. This can extend beyond the jobs that exist further up the ladder, to highlighting how the business will support each worker's personal development.

In recent years there has been a drop in the number of apprenticeships available to UK workers. Last year the government set about setting this right with a plan to

create three million apprenticeships by 2020. Developing skills on the job could help solve the problem the sector faces in filling the skills gap quickly.

There are plenty of ways manufacturing businesses can boost their appeal to younger workers without shaping their whole company culture around selfies and smashed avocado on toast, from providing tangible benefits that help solve real world problems like financial burden, to highlighting progression opportunities and shouting about the innovative technologies your company is adopting. □

“Access to pay and training can build a stronger, more productive workforce”

Hastee Pay provides fully funded earnings on demand schemes for employers.  
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## Advertorial

# Performance Window, Door And Framing

**After extensive research and consultation with key supply partners, Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems has delivered the Comar 9P.i High Performance Window, Door and Framing System.**

The Research indicated that a thermally efficient future-proof facade system was required, with off-site manufacture and value engineering solutions that actively seek to reduce material content. Comar 9P.i High Performance framing offers two options of construction - ladder frame or mitre frame. Comar 9P.i windows and 9P.i doors can be hung directly from the frame, reducing the need for additional outer frames.

#### Flexibility

Building typologies differ from refurbishment to new build, so

Comar 9P.i has profiles widths from 78mm, 100mm and 120mm creating greater design flexibility. There are three levels of thermal performance, standard, multi-chamber and multi-chamber thermal foam, creating U-values of between 1.6 to 1.0 for a typical grid size with opening vents.

#### Sight-lines

Comar 9P.i has slim 65mm sight-lines. Glazing lines are flush, maintaining consistent lines for a sleek external facade providing straight interfacing with walls, internal floors and partitions. Consideration is also given for plaster lines with profiles to cater for differing situations.

Comar 9P.i windows can be open-in or open-out side, top or bottom hung and a tilt and turn option, offering unobtrusive ventilation. Comar 5P.i vertical slid-

ing windows and horizontal windows can also be integrated into the Comar 9P.i framing. Glazing sizes have been catered for up to 62mm meaning that future requirements for high performing acoustic or triple glazed projects can be specified. ■

Picture: The Comar system in



use in a London