



HOW AO.COM'S APPRENTICES DELIVER AN INSTANT IMPACT

AO is one of the UK's leading online electrical retailers. Since the business started, 15 years ago it has placed customer service at the heart of everything it does, making sure it delivers on a set of exceptionally high standards for its customers. As a result, the company has established itself as a leader in online retail.

To maintain that position, AO wants to ensure that it has the right skill mix in place. From its digital offering to its huge logistics operation, AO needs qualified, reliable and innovative thinkers. That means recruiting the very best but also growing their own. Doing this will ensure that the company is future-proof, and has a sustainable pipeline of talent coming through.

Ensuring AO.com have the right talent

A central part of that effort has been the company's apprenticeship scheme. As one of the first in the country to launch a digital apprenticeship, AO took on six young apprentices to work amongst its marketing, IT and video departments. The apprenticeship scheme, which was delivered in collaboration with Arch Apprentices, lasts two years, and allows teenagers, many from the local area, to concentrate on their chosen area of the business, completing relevant assignments to achieve their overall qualification.

Apprenticeships offer both a short and long term boost to a business. In the short term, new hires coming on board immediately provide an injection of energy and new thinking to the business while addressing skills gaps.

Longer term, the company not only improves its internal skills levels, but it also gains a reputation for developing talent, a crucial differentiator in the competitive labour market, where the best and brightest are in great demand. Beyond that, the workforce is better trained, more motivated and engaged with the business vision.

AO.com receive recognition for their dedication to providing excellent apprenticeships

For AO, the impact has been immediate, so much so just a year after adopting the scheme, the business was awarded the Newcomer Large Employer of the Year Award at the National Apprenticeship Awards. The award recognised the instant impact that adopting apprenticeships had delivered for AO: not just in the digital sphere, but also in shaking up and improving its talent development in areas from facilities and gas installation to logistics and management.

“ IT'S BEEN A FANTASTIC INTRODUCTION INTO THE WORKING WORLD, AND I HOPE TO STAY WITH THE COMPANY FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ”

But what of the apprentices themselves? Oliver Stell, a level 4 digital marketing apprentice at AO, said that since joining the company, he had had a great experience.

What's next for AO.com?

So what's next? AO is always searching for people with the 'AO DNA' and its apprentices have shown this in abundance and have all embodied the AO driven and bold values.

The mission statement at AO is 'To be exceptional in the moments that matter' and it feels that its apprentices have definitely proven that.

