

# TR In the Spotlight

## Starting with a bang: Encouraging young people into STEM careers



August 2019



At TR Fastenings we are really proud to champion young engineering talent. We have long recognised the need for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills across many aspects of our business, not just in the 'traditional' engineering departments.

In this blog, we will share our experience of nurturing interest amongst young people to embark on STEM careers and in particular, the schemes and apprenticeships we are proud to run in our business.

### What are STEM skills and why are they so important?

The rapid growth of high-tech jobs and a lack of uptake in STEM education in recent years, particularly by girls (a government report highlights that only 8% of STEM apprenticeships are undertaken by women) have combined to cause a massive shortfall in the young people suitable and available for STEM roles. This is bad news for our economy.

Why are STEM skills so important? STEM education is vital for critical thinking skills which are fundamental to innovation and business success. It's not just the tech and engineering sectors that need employees with a STEM education.

The manufacturing, R&D, financial services, medicine and healthcare sectors and more rely on young people choosing STEM career pathways. In fact, critical thinking skills are essential for innovation across almost all industries.

### TR Fastenings gets involved in Sussex Big Bang Fair

We were delighted to be involved in the recent STEM Sussex Big Bang Fair South East. Two TR employees, Luke Murphy, HR Manager and Keith Gibb, Head of Web Development, were judges at the event to select finalists from heats for the Big Bang UK Young Scientists and Engineer Awards.

The event, now in its seventh year, aims to inspire young people to study STEM courses and pursue STEM careers. The Mid Sussex Times reported that more than ten thousand young people from 250 schools attended the annual event.

Luke Murphy said, "This event is more important now than ever before. Technology around the globe is changing at such a rapid pace. We need to engage young people in STEM subjects, not only to address the current skills gap, but to ensure UK businesses are able to compete on the world stage in the future. The importance of nurturing upcoming talent has never been more pressing."

August 2019



### Our apprenticeships

It sounds dramatic but the world would be a very different place without STEM. We need STEM to make a difference and to stay competitive in business and as a nation.

It's why we believe so passionately in investing in young people. Our two-year apprenticeship schemes offer school leavers an alternative route into a STEM career with TR Fastenings. Young people with a GCSE pass in Maths and English, who have an enthusiasm for business, good communication skills and an aptitude for learning, are invited to apply.

We also offer NVQ training in business administration and customer services.

### The future: what else needs to be done?

In 2015, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills reported that 43% of STEM vacancies were hard to fill. The skills gap has improved but there is still much work to be done by government, schools and business.

Encouraging and nurturing interest among children and young people is vital from an early age. This relies on educational policy, parents and collaboration between businesses and schools. Diversity across genders and ages also needs addressing. Supporting key influencers, (teachers, carers and parents), to help young people access STEM pathways is key.

Our young people are crucial for pushing the boundaries, making new discoveries and influencing the future of our business. STEM is the future and we're really proud to be helping young people be part of it.