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A blog by Arran Leighton, National Manager at leading trade supplier, [Electricfix](#)

THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE

I have always had an enormous appreciation for apprenticeships; they are key to the growth and success of the construction industry, whilst providing young people with the skills and experience needed to build a successful career as a tradesperson.

Despite an increase in the number of apprentices across the construction sector, a large skills gap still remains. As a result, the industry has been left with an insufficient number of skilled workers and young talent. Figures from a Freedom of Information request made by the building workers' union, UCATT, revealed that just 24,850 people are undertaking construction apprenticeships, yet the industry needs nearly 45,000 new apprentices every year to continue to fulfil demand, demonstrating the real need for apprentices across the UK.

In its role as a key supplier to the trade, Electricfix's umbrella organisation, Screwfix, reviewed the topic of apprenticeships and asked tradespeople for their opinion on the subject. The findings were detailed in the *Tradesman Manifesto** and it highlighted that more than three quarters of UK tradespeople want the Government to raise the number of apprenticeship places from 110,000 to 400,000 whilst encouraging the same amount of school leavers to take up apprenticeships and go to university.

However, it also showed that many of the plumbers, electricians, builders, carpenters and other tradespeople who were questioned have little or no experience of taking on apprentices, with only 14% having employed one in the last year.

In response to the need for more apprentices and the feedback we received from our trade customers, we created a guide to help tradespeople understand how easy it is to hire an apprentice. The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills

(BIS) visited a Screwfix store in Brixton recently to launch the booklet which is free and available from Screwfix stores across England.

Entitled '[Your Guide to Hiring an Apprentice](#)', it was released in conjunction with BIS and is an easy-to-use, pocket-sized information source designed to expose many of the myths surrounding apprenticeships. It includes everything those in the trade need to know in bite-size chunks – from the benefits of taking on an apprentice, to where to go first and the help available.

As a key supplier to the trade, we're always looking for ways to support UK tradespeople in growing their businesses, so finding out and helping to address those issues that matter most – like apprenticeships – is something we're keen to do. We developed the guide especially to help tradespeople who have little or no experience of apprentices, so whether they're looking to find out a bit more about how to hire an apprentice, or the financial support available, it's designed to provide an overview of all the key issues.

While we want to work with our customers to support the future of the trade through initiatives such as 'Your Guide to Hiring an Apprentice', we're also keen to shine a light on the great work already being done by apprentices in the industry. With this in mind, we recently crowned, Thomas Morgan as the Screwfix Trade Apprentice of 2016.

This was the second year of the competition, this year's winner received a business package worth £10,000 including a Google Chromebook, as well as £5,000 worth of Screwfix products and up to £3,000 to spend on training courses to further enhance their career.

We hope these initiatives go some way towards helping tradespeople take on apprentices and encouraging more into the construction industry through this route at a time when they are so badly needed.

To download a copy of '*Your Guide to Hiring an Apprentice*' visit www.screwfix.com/apprenticeguide

*Screwfix *Tradesman Manifesto* is a survey of more than 600 UK tradespeople undertaken to understand what is important to them and how they are reacting to the constantly changing economic and technological landscapes.

For more information on Electricfix, visit www.electricfix.com, call on 03330 112 333, pick up a copy of the catalogue at a local Electricfix store or order online.

ENDS

SUMMARY FOR INCLUSION IN PRINT VERSION OF ELECTRICAL TIMES MAGAZINE

THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE

In the latest blog from leading trade supplier, Electricfix, National Manager, Arran Leighton discusses the need for more apprentices into the trades and what it is doing to support the industry.

Figures show how many apprentices are needed in construction, but there are currently not enough entering the trades to meet demand. Alongside this, many tradespeople would like more to be done to encourage people to undertake apprenticeships, but there are many who do not have experience of hiring them, or an understanding of the process.

It is clear more needs to be done to help hire apprentices and to encourage more people into the trades through this route. For this reason, Electricfix's umbrella organisation, Screwfix, has launched 'Your Guide to Hiring an Apprentice', which is available for free in Screwfix stores across England and has just crowned 2016's Screwfix Trade Apprentice – a competition designed to shine a light on the best new talent in the construction trades.

To download a copy of 'Your Guide to Hiring an Apprentice' visit www.screwfix.com/apprenticeguide

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ENDS

Notes to Editors

Electricfix is a supplier dedicated to electrical contractors. The business has developed pioneering partnerships with SELECT, NICEIC, ECA and Electrical Safety First to support the industry and promote safety in electrical installation. It uses the market leading business infrastructure available to Screwfix to ensure customers get the very best products at low fixed prices and fast, reliable service including:

- A network of trade only counters throughout the UK
- An award winning call centre with a dedicated Electricfix Team
- Industry-leading next day delivery to UK addresses
- Easy same day collection through the trade only counters
- Leading brands, including Crabtree, Wylex, MK, Legrand and Osram