

EEF Invests £2m Into State-Of-The-Art Training Centre To Help Close Manufacturing Skills Gap

Thursday 3 April, 2014

The future of British manufacturing was today given a significant boost with the opening of a £2 million state-of-the-art training centre by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation.

The centre, located in the Midlands, has been purpose-built to train manufacturers and engineers of the future in world-class facilities replicating a real manufacturing environment. It will train around 250 apprentices a year in a variety of vital skills including milling, CNC machinery, welding and fabrication.

As well as apprentices and young people, the new centre will also provide development training for experienced employees, ensuring that they are equipped with the right skills for the future demands of modern engineering and manufacturing. This will, in turn, help tackle the increasing skills challenges of an ageing workforce.

Its opening is seen as a key step in securing the future of British manufacturing. The UK is the world's 8th largest manufacturer, currently employing 2.6 million people and accounting for 11% of GDP. However, for this success story to carry on at a pace, manufacturers need to attract fresh, talented new employees - with training playing a crucial role in their development.

Terry Scuoler, Chief Executive at EEF, says: "Young people are the future of manufacturing - their skills and talents are the lifeblood that allows British businesses to develop and grow. However, this lifeblood is still only trickling through when we need a strong and steady flow.

"This centre is an important step in encouraging youngsters into our sector so that we can start to close the skills gap. But apprenticeships aren't just a 'win' for industry, they're a 'win' for young people too - offering an opportunity to kick-start an exciting and rewarding career in a vibrant and dynamic sector. The more who take up this opportunity, the better it will be for manufacturing and the wider economy."

The centre has been warmly welcomed by local MP, Khalid Mahmood, a former engineer himself. While opening the centre he highlighted the vital role the facilities will play in training new engineering and manufacturing talent, as well as contributing to the ongoing recovery of the UK economy.

Khalid Mahmood, MP for Perry Barr, Birmingham, says: "This is a fantastic project, and a wonderful opportunity to get young people into engineering. This ambitious initiative is exactly the type of investment in skills this city needs."

EEF research shows that manufacturers are increasingly recognising the importance of apprentices in addressing the skills gap within the sector. Six in ten have taken on an engineering and manufacturing apprentice in the last 12 months, with expectations for this to soar to over two-thirds of manufacturers in the next 12 months.

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