

The Business and Professional Services sector is a key growth priority area within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) economic plan and when you look at the data it's easy to see why: Greater Birmingham has the largest regional business, financial and professional services hub in the UK, bringing £23bn (25% of GVA) into the region and employing nearly 220,000 people.

The West Midlands Combined Authority predicts the highest levels of employment growth will be in the BPS sector (47.6%) and that it will contribute the biggest absolute change in terms of economic growth (£25.8bn) (2013-2030).

However, skills and diversity are still widely identified as a risk to the future success of the Region's sector, compounded by the challenges of an ageing demographic, unskilled younger population and a "mystery" around the sector.

The work that we do within the GBPSA is designed to provide a solution to these very real sector challenges, to provide a hub for the Business and Professional Services Sector community within Greater Birmingham to access training and development programmes and highly motivated and determined young talent, ensuring the supply of a well-educated workforce to meet the needs of employers.

Collaboration is key to the Academy model and it is with thanks to our board partners in particular: Bilfinger GVA, Deloitte, Deutsche Bank, GateleyPlc, KPMG, LaSerUK, Lloyds and Wesleyan that we are able to provide students with such a relevant and engaging programme. We must also thank the additional 35 sector firms who have signed up to support the Academy vision and growth plans within the last 12 month period allowing us to grow the model even further to ensure that as a region we can "grow our own talent".

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and if you'd like to find out more how we can work together please do get in touch by emailing our Academy Director: [Suzie.Branch@bmetc.ac.uk](mailto:Suzie.Branch@bmetc.ac.uk).

## Focussing on Success



**The Professional Services Academy has been operating for three years now and our third year has been busier than ever:**

Students have participated in over 43 hours of workshops and lectures designed to support their studies, provide essential "soft-skill" development and inform our talented young population on the types of career that they could develop within the region's Business and Professional Services Sector (BPS).

Over 76 employees from the region's business and professional services sector have supported students through the mentoring scheme, providing 1-2-1 support to enable students to understand how to access careers and prepare themselves for the world of work.

At the time of writing over 30 internship opportunities have been provided to our students over the summer months to enable them to get a real understanding and experience of the working environment.

We've also been busy with our Apprenticeship programmes, supporting partner firms with advertising and recruiting talent into their schemes and with the delivery of programmes across the sector.

A big congratulations to all the students in the Academy who have worked so hard and participated in the programme. Next year's programme is being finalised and it looks like it will be even busier – here's a snippet of what the workshops alone will bring: We'll be looking at business ownership with GateleyPLC, building successful teams with Deutsche Bank, developing customer relationship management with Deloitte, speed networking with GVA, forecasting personal finances with Lloyds, developing interview techniques with Handelsbanken, interpreting accounts with KPMG, developing promotional campaigns with LaSerUK and creating a personal brand with Wesleyan!

# Professional Services Week

The Academy was a key partner in the city's first ever Professional Services Week (PSW) a unique scheme led and delivered by the sector's membership and representative body "BPS Birmingham Ltd". In this edition of Link we catch up with the Executive Director, who created the concept of "PSW" Hilary Smyth-Allen.



## Q: What is Professional Services Week?

A whole week of activities delivered by BPS firms to local school children and young people to demystify the sector and to inspire young people from within city to consider a career in business and professional services.

## Q: Where did the idea come from?

In 2013 BPS Birmingham, published the "Birmingham Future Commission" to look at how to attract and retain talent in our sector in our region. The report outlined a series of recommendations, including establishing the GBPSA, but also to increase relationships with school children and BPS firms to help educate the young people of our city about the type of careers there are in our sector.

## Q: Why do we need to promote the sector in this way?

As we all know the sector is facing a serious skills challenge. It is anticipated that the sector will see growth of 30% by 2030 and that will create a further 60,000 jobs. With talented young people now being able to choose locations across the world to start their careers it is vital that young people residing in the city's schools are inspired and motivated to consider a career in professional services in Birmingham to resource those opportunities.

## Q: Will there be a Professional Services Week in 2017?

Yes and plans have already started! We want to grow on the success of our first year which saw over 40 firms, including all the GBPSA board members engage with over 200 year 9+ pupils in just 5 working days. This year was all about "giving it a go" and we've had such strong feedback from firms and schools that we are already shaping the plans for 2017.

Thanks to Urban Communications and BPS Birmingham for contributing.



### More information:

Professional Services Week:  
<http://bpsbirmingham.co.uk/professional-services-week>

BPS Birmingham Future Commission:  
<http://bpsbirmingham.co.uk/future/future-commission/>

## Mentoring with Success

Our mentoring programme enables students to work with business professionals on a 1-2-1 basis to help them with career advice and guidance. Mentors are all offered the opportunity to study with an ILM in Mentoring as part of the programme and we'd like to say congratulations to Darrell Carless and Robert O'Neil, both from LaSerUK who have successfully passed their ILM in Mentoring.

## High standards awarded!

### Congratulations to colleagues:

Elkie Gibson, Kim Johnson, Jane Lemm, Claire Lamb, Chris Austin, Elaine Darks, Chris Rademacher, Helen Dunwell, Carol Parry, Abie Collins, who were recently received the "Employer Responsive High Standards" award, reflecting the high quality delivery of training to firms and organisations.

# Accelerating careers with Apprenticeships

In this edition of Link, we catch up with GBPSA graduate and current apprentice, Tara Lucock on her experience so far at Handelsbanken.

It was while studying her business diploma that Tara's eyes were opened up to the fact that there was more than one way to break into the world of business and finance.

"My first impression of an Apprenticeship was that you wouldn't learn much and that you'd be working for a little as £2 an hour," she said. "Joining Stourbridge College's Professional Services Academy showed me the true picture.

"I was introduced to a business mentor from Handelsbanken and met other business professionals who assured me I didn't have to go to university to succeed in my career. I realised that Apprenticeships were a good alternative option. I completed a work placement

with the organisation and loved the environment I was in. I also saw I would have the chance to learn a range of skills as I wouldn't be tied to one particular role.

"Now that I'm studying an accountancy qualification and I'm well into my Apprenticeship, I know I've made a real start to my career and have a long-term future in sight."

To find out more about our apprenticeship provision and how we can help you launch, develop or grow your apprenticeship programme that is flexible, well-tailored and sector specific please contact:

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Deloitte.

Deutsche Bank



Gateley



KPMG

LaSer UK

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