

**DIGITAL  
NATIVE**

**Thinking of hiring a  
digital apprentice?**

## Welcome

If you're reading this guide, it probably means that you're thinking of hiring a digital apprentice.

As with most things, our experience has taught us that considering a few things before you make the decision to go ahead will significantly improve the likelihood that the apprenticeship will be a success and that it will be a positive experience both for you and the apprentice.

This is not a definitive guide, more of an FAQ's and wherever you are on the decision-making process we'd love to arrange a call and discuss your unique requirements so please get in touch.

## The role

The first questions any organisation should be asking themselves when considering employing a digital apprentice are:

- **Do we actually have a job?**

This may sound like a strange question but for the apprenticeship to be successful there needs to be an actual job for the apprentice to do. Although it is admirable that an organisation may want to “give a person a go” or “let someone get some experience” if there is not a job for someone to do it is likely to lead to the apprenticeship being a poor experience for everyone involved.

- **Can we clearly define what this job involves / what the apprentice will do?**

It’s important to remember that the apprenticeship is usually the apprentices first job in tech. They are much more likely to thrive in the role if you have clear expectations of them and have clearly defined tasks for them to do.

- **Are we going to ask them to do known repeatable tasks?**

Especially at the start of their apprenticeship, apprentices work best when they are given repeatable tasks and asked to work to defined procedures. If they are asked to research new tech or ways of working then it’s important for these to be in non-business critical areas as outcomes may be variable.

- **Can we articulate a future?**

You will attract and retain the best junior talent if you are able to clearly articulate that there is a role for them after the apprenticeship, that there will be career development and progression and importantly, their salary will increase as their skills and experience grows.

## Organisational structure

Again, there are some points to consider before making the decision to go ahead:

- **Senior leaders**

Apprenticeships work best when there is clear commitment from senior leaders and everyone in the organisation knows it is strategically important.

- **Line manager**

The choice of who to line manage the apprentice is an important one. It can be at times, an emotional roller coaster so they must want to do this role and also have the time to support the apprentice.

There can often be an admiral desire for senior leaders to want to do this role but we usually find that this role is better filled by someone lower down the organisational hierarchy. Line managing the apprentice can often be a great way to give more junior team members their first management experience and support their career development.

- **Mentor**

We've seen many employers use workplace mentors to great success (often previous apprentices!) giving the apprentice someone to go to with questions they may not want to ask their line manager.

- **Welfare and Wellbeing**

There are also benefits to having a known person who can be a person for the apprentice to go to with any issues and also just check in on them once a month. This role is often best filled by a non-technical person.

- **Hybrid and remote working**

Although experienced employees can often work well and welcome the benefits of fully remote working, apprentices work best and develop faster when they are asked to attend a physical place of work at least three days per week.

## Choice of training provider

An apprenticeship is a tripartite arrangement between an employer, an apprentice, and the training provider. I would argue that the training provider has the least impact on the success of the apprenticeship as you can't have a successful apprenticeship without a good employer or a good apprentice, but you can get a good outcome if the provider is poor.

However, the training provider has an important role so the questions to ask when deciding your provider include:

- **Are they genuinely interested in my organisation?**  
Good providers will be wanting to hear all about your organisation, what your experience is with apprenticeships, understand your unique requirements.
- **How will they make the programme bespoke to my organisation?**  
Good providers will be able to offer you a bespoke programme that meets your needs.
- **Are they talking about developing good people or delivering an apprenticeship?**  
The outcome that you're looking for from the apprenticeship is a good person, that remains in your organisation as a valued employee. Your training provider should see their role as partnering with you to achieve this.
- **Size**  
There can be a natural thought process that the best providers will be the largest.

In most markets it is cheaper to buy from a huge manufacturer than a small manufacturer that will craft a bespoke product just for you.

As apprenticeships are regulated and have fixed price caps it's one of the few times that you can enjoy the benefit of working with a provider that will provide a bespoke programme without paying extra for the service.

## Recruitment services

Most providers will offer a recruitment service and here's a few points to consider:

- **Are they charging?**

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of providers that charge for recruitment. It's important to remember that a provider can't deliver an apprenticeship without an apprentice so by paying for this you are effectively paying for a service that then allows the provider to make money.

The best providers will not charge for this service.

- **Are they sharing their experience of apprenticeship recruitment?**

A good provider will not simply list the job vacancy you give them but they will share their experience and advise amendments that will increase the applicant pool.

- **What is the service?**

It is important to understand what services the provider is offering, is it simply a listing service, how will candidates be shortlisted, is the process based on merit and designed to encourage a diverse range of candidates for you to interview?

## Summary

Hopefully this guide has been useful and if you have any questions or would like to discuss your requirements, please get in touch using:

[martin@dn-uk.com](mailto:martin@dn-uk.com)

**Good luck!**