

Shared Apprenticeship Pilot AMCANU



“Semta and Coleg Sir Gar have very high standards. The young apprentices are instilled with these standards from day one which means when they are in the workplace they have both the aptitude and attitude to succeed.”

Owain Davies
Company Director -

Amcanu is a Welsh word that means to design...to have purpose and that is something the company's managing director Owain Davies certainly lives up to.

Having encountered a difficult few years through the recession which began in 2008 and forced the company to lay off many skilled workers, things are on the up.

At the heart of the proud business, which specialises in providing acoustic insulated equipment in an industrial environment, remains its people.

Based in Burry Port, Carmarthenshire, the “sheet metal tailors” has 28 employees, a turnover of £3m in 2012 – up six per cent – and an MD who is passionate about the need to give talent a chance.

With one mechanical engineer apprentice Joshua Element in his second year, Amcanu has just taken on Josh Palmer through the Semta Shared Apprenticeship Pilot and the local Coleg Sir Gar (Carmarthenshire College).

“Even through the difficult and challenging times we have to plan for the future,” says Owain. “My father started the business nearly 40 years ago and it has always had a strong philosophy to encourage and give young people opportunities.

“Our technical manager started here as an apprentice and as such understands the culture, our ways, and our customers. He was able to get experience in other ways through placements, work programmes and his college work but he understood the ethos – it is what we want from our employees.

“The college and Semta are exemplars in engineering. The training and resource they provide are invaluable to ensure we get a more rounded apprentice. We look to recruit every other year and we are given a shortlist of three high calibre candidates to interview. I cannot speak highly enough of Barry Liles, the college principal whose background is in engineering, this is apparent in all our dealings with him and his staff.”



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The Semta Shared Apprenticeship pilot is a three-year training programme combining work-based training with off-the-job development.

The practical training is shared between participating companies and is designed to develop a broad range of skills aligned to business needs.

It provides an opportunity to tailor apprentice training to meet company needs; share and gain from regional skills and expertise; offset part of the cost of taking on an apprentice; recruit from a pool of engineering students and develop skills for the future.

In year one there is no cost to the employer, while in year two there is a contribution towards the apprentice salary with the full salary costs to be met by the employer in year three. All training is funded.

Owain says the support is invaluable. "I strongly believe giving young people an opportunity to earn while they learn through the vocational rather than the academic route gives them greater opportunities in the long-term."

The business became part of the fabric of the community in 1975 when it started as Spencer Davies Engineering. Owain's father Spencer is Group Chairman of Amcanu, which is proud of many repeat orders from blue-chip companies, providing acoustic and soundproofing solutions for industrial equipment.

Semta Business Partner Ken Toop said: "Owain and his father are well respected by the Welsh Government and for a small firm do much for local business. They are a unique and inspiring firm that not only train apprentices but also help out with other companies."

Josh Palmer, 18, began his apprenticeship linked to a HNC mechanical engineering course at Coleg Sir Gar in September 2012.

Josh, a former pupil at Burry Port's Glanymor School, said: "I'm very grateful to Amcanu for giving me the chance of an apprenticeship. A HNC qualification is my first target, but I hope to go on to do a degree.

"At school I originally wanted to be an architect, but when I checked things out at Coleg Sir Gar I could see that there was a big demand for engineering skills.

"I'm thoroughly enjoying my time at Amcanu. I've been working on the punch press and I've also been working on the computer side of things helping to programme the punch press. It's been great fun and I am learning something new every day."

Please contact Semta if you are a small to medium-sized company based in Wales that needs to:

- **Develop the skills to sustain or grow your business**
- **Adapt to new technology**
- **Retain and develop core technical expertise and skills**
- **Recruit an apprentice**
- **Recruit a graduate**

If you would like further information on how Semta can help you please contact:

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