

CASE STUDY:

INFLUENCING SUB-CONTRACTORS TO BOOST APPRENTICE NUMBERS AND PROMOTE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

COMPANY: BGIS

HOTSPOT REGION: All of NSW

TARGET:

- The benefits of a diverse workplace
- The benefits of investing in training pathways for employees
- Growing the business through its entry level workforce
- Encouraging women in trades

BGIS is a global leader in the provision of facility management, project delivery, energy and sustainability, asset management, workplace advisory, real estate services and technical services.

With a combined team of over 7,000 globally, BGIS focuses on delivering innovative service solutions that create value for its clients. The organisation works across several markets including Defence, Government, Higher Education, Utilities, Telecommunications, Financial Services, Oil & Gas, Healthcare and Cloud Enterprise. This presents job opportunities across a broad spectrum of career pathways.

Challenges attracting talent to a global business

“When I first started at BGIS in February 2019, most candidates didn’t realise they could do a trade or pursue a vast range of other career paths within such a large business,” explained Sophie Clark, Senior Recruitment Consultant. “The Technical Services Brand was relatively new, and I would speak to a minimum 50 candidates per week. Even if candidates were not suitable, I felt it was still important to grow the brand and educate candidates on who BGIS are, what we do and what our core values are. I’ve found over the last year, more and more candidates I have spoken to know us or at least have seen our vehicles around!”

Apprenticeships helping grow future technicians

Brad Robbins, Managing Director – Operations, Defence & FMO, said BGIS have a responsibility as a global organisation to create opportunities. “We want to be able to give back to the industry and ensure we can train up our future leaders, to create opportunities that might not necessarily exist. Our workforce is getting older and we need to ensure we provide opportunities for future trades and put employee opportunity first.”

"Given there is a candidate-driven market and employment rates are dropping, the business wants to give back by offering a fantastic incentive to build a new generation of technicians, to give them the guidance, support and encouragement to be our future leaders," explained Sophie "BGIS have a range of apprentices in all trades and almost all years, from first to fourth year. It is very hard for students to find companies who are willing to take on first year apprentices, and it amazing to see BGIS are doing this in multiple states across Australia. As we grow, we are looking for technicians with the mindset to be adaptable, have a good exposure to IT systems and process and of course a strong trade skill set."

Brad said government financial assistance helps support its apprentice strategies, allowing BGIS to make the roles more cost effective and off-set the high cost of training required in the early years. "The investment we make in early training isn't necessarily recoverable, so the government's assistance allows us to absorb those costs and continue providing the roles."

The benefits of workplace diversity

"As a female working in the blue-collar industry – though granted I'm not on the tools, so to speak –it's fantastic to see a much more diverse candidate market, with BGIS able to secure top talent from women, mature aged apprentices, Indigenous workers and much more," said Sophie, who believes that BGIS is benefitting immensely from workplace diversity . "This is breaking the stereotypes, and bringing people together from all walks and stages of life. A dedicated, hardworking apprentice brings so much passion and innovation to the company."

Brad believes that workplace diversity is critical to building BGIS' long-term work force. "The willingness and drive of these candidates, the commitment they have to the role and the industry itself, to break down barriers also allows these candidates to see a stable and progressive career path," he said.

Apprenticeships kick-starting long term careers

The entry point into the business via an apprenticeship or traineeship is just the start of a long-term career with BGIS. "Whilst I have been with BGIS, all apprentices who completed their apprenticeship have had the option to continue on as a qualified technician with us, and all have chosen to do so," explained Sophie. "We celebrate by hosting an onsite barbecue breakfast for the team to congratulate the newly qualified technician! From there, we support and grow their career and aim to progress them into supervisor or management positions."

Brad added that apprenticeships help build a skillset that is in high demand in the property industry. "Apprentices who graduate can either continue in their trade – which many chose to do – or move into supervision and management in their chosen field," he said "A trade gives you a good grounding in the property industry, which is highly sought after."

Ever considered completing a trade?
Meet Stacey!

Q & A with BGIS apprentice Stacey Taylor
Qualification: Airconditioning and Refrigeration Certificate 3



After joining BGIS TS as a Trades Assistant, Stacey commenced her HVAC Apprenticeship with the organisation. As a new mum to a baby boy, Stacey knows how meaningful her role is – she works to keep running the same hospital that provides treatment to her family and friends. The pride she takes in her work is aligned with BGIS's corporate values of 'Unwavering Integrity' and 'Memorable Customer Experience'.

Getting to know Stacey!

What have you learned about yourself while doing an apprenticeship in this industry?

- That you can do anything if you put your mind to it and your goals are set. I was nervous, but pushed myself. Believe in yourself and you can do anything.

What inspired you to choose an apprenticeship and how did you select the trade

- Having started as a trades assistant in HVAC, the choice of HVAC was easy as the trade is challenging and includes a bit of everything, with a variety of work involved – it brings in plumbing, welding, refrigeration and electrical. You even get a restricted electrical licence. Overall it's a fun and challenging trade.

What is a typical day on the job like?

- It's very unpredictable in the hospital with so many critical areas, anything can go down and we are always striving to meet the customer's needs. There's always something going on that provides us a chance to strive and push ourselves.

How do you keep going when things get really tough on the job?

- I'm not afraid to ask for help. I seek advice from the wider team and my supervisor who are really supportive. We understand each other, so it's easy to seek advice from them, they are a good team to learn from.

And what would surprise people about your job?

- The variety of work that we cover when working at a hospital. Unfortunately, you do have to see a lot of confronting things. The first time I had to work in the morgue when the freezer went down was an eye opener. I was upset for some time after that, as it's not like on what you see on TV. My supervisor guided me to our Employee Assistance Program that provides confidential phone counselling and support.

How do you juggle family and work life?

- I'm lucky to have a good support network, even with TAFE and all the study that I do Monday to Friday. I separate the two and use the weekend as family time. I have a supportive team if my son is sick or there is an emergency. The team will always check in to make sure things are okay. My supervisors and team take a lot time and effort to educate and teach me and are always available.

Have you ever encountered stereotypes about being a "woman" working in a skills or 'technical' industry? If yes, how do you deal with weird or old-fashioned attitudes?

- Having been in a typically male dominated industry for nine years now, I've not experienced any stereotypes. If anything, I've seen that the guys are very supportive, if you know how to handle yourself. They have a lot of time for people who want to be good at their job.

Why would you recommend businesses to take on more apprentices?

- The training programs and support behind the programs now are vast, including all the support that the TAFEs provide.

What would you say to someone contemplating beginning an apprenticeship?

- Just go for it - don't let fears hold you back! Do your research into the trade and just go for it, you have nothing to lose.