

CASE STUDY:

EFFECTIVE WORK EXPERIENCE MODEL IMPROVING APPRENTICE RETENTION

COMPANY: Peter Warren Automotive

HOTSPOT REGION: Western Sydney

TARGET:

- Engaging staff with VET sector experience to support recruitment strategies
- How Skillsroad can connect with entry level talent
- Building the profile of automotive career paths via school engagement



peterwarren.com.au
Peter Warren Automotive

Peter Warren Automotive is a family-owned and operated company based Warwick Farm in South West Sydney. The company commenced business operations in Liverpool in 1958, and has expanded to sites across Campbelltown, Narellan, the Northern Beaches, Bathurst and Gold Coast. In 2020 Peter Warren Automotive employed 40 Apprentices

For the entire Peter Warren Group, finding work-ready young people has always been the challenge. Peter Warren has historically found it difficult to find schools who support the VET sector. With a large focus upon higher education, they have felt that schools were not promoting pathways into traditional trades.

The business looked to find a solution to this, to connect the many stakeholders with a vested interest in Apprentice and Traineeships including community, schools and industry. In 2019 Peter Warren Automotive employed a Group Training Manager to be the link between the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network, Schools and Training Services NSW and Peter Warren Automotive.

Youth Engagement

The strategy involved a number of elements.

- The business has identified that school engagement is a critical supply channel for future talent.
- Peter Warren also engaged Skillsroad, with its enormous digital footprint and over 350,000 members to help build some excitement around automotive career paths
- They used other advertising avenues to help engage local job candidates with a real passion for the Automotive trade.

All of these elements combined has increase the exposure of careers within Peter Warren Automotive to a new audience who may have never considered them as an option.

Effective Approach to Work Experience

Peter Warren has adopted a fresh approach to work experience, putting potential candidates through a vigorous phone-based pre-screen to assess their interest and

suitability to the trade. This has improved the rate of suitable and motivated work experience participants.

During work experience, participants are given a WHS Induction and they learn about the history of Peter Warren. They are then given an overview of the exciting career opportunities within the automotive trade, appealing to the aspirations of potential candidates. Participants are also tested to ensure that they have both the right attitude and skills to succeed. Successful participants are offered a position and signed into a Traineeship or Apprenticeship through Apprenticeship Support Australia.

Since introducing this work experience model, Peter Warren has experienced a positive impact on its apprentice retention rates. Now boasting a 90% retention rate, this has been the most successful recruitment period in Peter Warren history. Investing in a system to test the suitability of job candidates, as well as nurturing young people in the Peter Warren culture, has produced apprentices who are tailored to requirements of the business.

Government assistance supporting this innovative model

The apprentice financial incentives obviously help business growth, however Peter Warren Automotive are using these incentives to better support its apprentice workforce. It allows the business to allocate mentors and supervisors from within the team to help nurture those new to the industry and entrench them in the organisations culture. The current fee-free training is providing opportunities for upskilling, allowing its trainees and apprentices to fully benefit from in-dealer training

Connecting with the local community via schools has also had a positive impact on business, increasing its customer base with the parents of its apprentices, trainees and work experience participants.

Gary Davenport, Group Training Manager said: "As an employer, engaging with the local community helps to find quality young people. This builds rapport and in-turn ensures all parties provide the required support for Trainees and Apprentices. As such, we are now invited to events that we had never attended before. This helps supports business growth as it creates awareness for the Peter Warren brand. The benefits are clear... Increased retention because we are employing the right Apprentices and growing our own... the Peter Warren way."



Peter Warren Automotive's 2020 apprentice enrolment day