



Beyond Local Digital Media Company

A talented apprentice is helping this new business to grow and thrive.



Name: Beyond Local

Location: Westerham, Kent

Framework: Creative and digital media

Perfect route

Beyond Local is a small digital media company based in Westerham, Kent, providing services including website building and graphic design primarily to SMEs. The company began trading in March 2014 and shortly afterwards employed its first apprentice, 19-year-old Daryl Bacon, on an Advanced Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media.

I'd always had trouble hiring UK-based software developers, and at the same time I knew there were lots of unemployed young people," says Mark Duerden, Technical Director. "So we took on an apprentice and it was a lightbulb moment, we knew this is exactly what we should be doing.

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Young people just understand new technology in a very intuitive way."

As a small company, Beyond Local benefited from the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE 16-24), an additional payment of £1,500. "We used this to pay for additional training courses, with a focus on what we needed Daryl to learn for the business," says Mark.

Saving money

As part of his apprenticeship Daryl is working towards a Level 3 NVQ in Creative and Digital Media, while undertaking a role that sees him building websites of increasing complexity, producing videos and working on social media.

Having Daryl as part of the team has brought a multitude of benefits to the business, as Mark explains: "We love having him here, he's very able, enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and has a lot of passion for what we're doing – he just gets it. He has added value from the first day and he's very much part of the team."

"It's also been very cost effective for us to employ an apprentice; it's a low-risk way of hiring someone, and helps us to grow the business. Even when you hire skilled staff there's still a level of training required, but with Daryl it's part of the whole package, and doesn't disrupt the business."

Future development

Daryl has now finished his apprenticeship, and Beyond Local have taken him on as a full time employee.

Mark has also recently become an Apprenticeship Ambassador for the National Apprenticeship Service, talking to other businesses about the advantages of hiring apprentices.

"I tell companies about the potential for growth that apprentices bring," says Mark. "Apprentices introduce new ideas, and if you get it right as an employer, you've got yourself a happy well-trained staff member who could be with you for a very long time and make a real return on your investment."

To find out more about the business benefits of apprenticeships, please contact the National Apprenticeship Service on 08000 150 600 or visit the website greatbusiness.gov.uk/taking-on-an-apprentice/.