



MADE IN
GROUP

A brief look into the Advisory Board: Skills

Thursday 17th October 2019 / 9:30 am / MTC Coventry, Room 3

ATTENDEES

Christopher Greenough, Salop Powder Coating

Alun Lusty, CEO, ADI Group

David New, University College Birmingham

Paul Hodgetts, on behalf of **Gareth Jones**, In-comm

Carl Hughs, Plant Director, Dennis Eagle

Alessandro Sorrentino, Digital Content Specialist - Made in Group

Charles Addison, Deputy CEO, Made in Group

DISCUSSION POINTS

Introduction for Charles Addison. The group was updated on this new format, with new members including Rachel Grable from William King and Tony Sartori from Alucast, who were introduced as new members who will be joining the board at the next meeting.

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Charles discussed Lord Whitby and the value he brings to the group. This included how his involvement was originally a slow burn investment but is now starting to pay off.

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The video from the previous meeting was discussed. 5 Clients had taken part, but there were concerns about the quality of the video and the lack of inspiration it would give 16-year olds were where it presented to them.

Alun Lusty stated that the purpose of the video is to make engineers look like a viable alternative to university. In his word, "That's one of the trends. You know what university looks like and how you think it will be, this video should do the same for engineering."

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Excess Levy money was discussed as it was reported that there's still money available. Whilst the spending on apprenticeships has gone up 'dramatically', the figures have been blown out of the water by the government in 2018. The prediction was reported that by 2021, the overall Apprenticeship bill will be £4.5 Billion, with only £2.7 Billion being accounted for. Government, by 2020, will be spending £350 million more than pre-levy.

Carl Hughs said that "The whole budget is moving further away from what's going to build sustainability into business, and it's going to come to a point, as business picks up and our economy improves, that funding will need to better reflect this."

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The need for better infrastructure was discussed. It was mentioned how the first thing apprentices buy is a car, because public transport is bad, and a car is the only way they can get to training.

Christopher Green said that he's always argued that the apprenticeship leverage should be flexible and that you should be able to access that pot for anything to do with apprenticeships. So, for example, in his region, they struggle with transport. "By allowing this [Access of the fund in any way to support Apprenticeships] it would then create an energy which could be used to energize the sector."

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Board members discussed how only 28% of newly enrolled apprentices aged between 16 to 18-year-old, 41% are aged 25+, 30% are 19-24. There's been a big shift since the induction of the levy as large employers are effectively being taxed. Trailblazing groups are building degree level apprenticeships so that they can skill up their existing workforce. All of the money is shifting to a higher age group with a higher level of pensions.

David New mentioned that this means that those with higher skills are being attained and in the end, you've neither got that flow or that traction of young people coming into these businesses. Linking this back to Alun's video, the purpose of the video is that as an industry we've been struggling to get the right type of person because the schools are not advocating apprenticeships as an alternative to going into higher education.

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A members survey was suggested to find out why fewer 16-18-year-olds are being taken on. It was agreed that this would be a good idea to find out who in the membership has good data. Charles suggested pushing case studies to see what is working, and what is not.

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The board raised the idea that the skills gap will be worse in 12-months time, and a prediction that there's going to be a huge shift in how funding is allocated.

As mentioned by Christopher, “We thought that the end of March was going to be the end of it or the end of October would be the end of it. That would be great. But I just think this will drag on for another six months, during which people are unfortunately laying off or closing businesses, they're not going to take on apprentices. So all skills gap that we've got now will be worse in 12 months time is that there's also quite a big change, a huge shift in the way funding is allocated.”

STEPS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Alessandro will contact Alun in due course to get an update to the video and will provide updates to the board,
- The Made in Group will consider how to best implement a survey to address questions that will provide value to the advisory board and wider-members.
- Charles will look at possible moving the advisory board away from the MTC centre and possible to a member's premises. This could also include a change in time.
- Alessandro will contact advisory board members in due time to discuss creating a series of articles that would provide value to the advisory board.