

Driving apprentice success for Martin Robey Group



Background

Martin Robey Group, established in 1978 by Martin Robey, sells and manufactures vehicle body shells and spare parts, also its engineering division specialises in precision sheet metal fabrication.

The family-owned company is now managed by Martin's sons Brendon and Craig. Based in the Midlands, it has a large site made up of three units where it employs around 60 staff, including apprentices.

The apprentice scheme started 45 years ago in 1980, with the company still employing one of its first apprentices, Michael Dickinson as Shop Floor Charge Hand. The initial intake was four and each year the company takes on upwards of three apprentices. Typically, they are trained as multi-skilled, but owing to the work of the company training in traditional sheet metal practices is a priority.

There was previously a decline in traditional practices, but a resurgence has been seen in recent years driven in part by classic car restoration and a desire to retain the skills and knowledge of the traditional craftmanship.

Challenges – what led Martin Robey to work with Train'd Up

For the last 20 years the company had worked with a local college for its apprentice support. However, following some poor experiences and the need for sheet metal courses the company began to explore other options.

It recognised that another local company used Train'd Up, so began its investigations into Train'd Up's services.

- **Highly recommended:** Train'd Up was the highest recommended provider on the Government's apprenticeship scheme website and the company had received rave reviews from a local business.
- **Digital first approach:** The online aspect of the course was a real pull. It meant that students didn't need to be sent off to college, this was especially helpful as there were no course providers within a 50mile radius.
- **First-class trainers:** All courses are delivered by trained and approved professionals, who often have a background in industry.



Approach – the Train'd Up way

- **Partnership:** Train'd Up's knowledgeable trainers deliver the course content through online sessions. The on-site training is delivered and managed by Connor Knight, Apprentice Co-Ordinator, a time-served fully skilled sheet metal fabricator who has been with Martin Robey Group for 12 years and Foreman, Leigh Holt, who has 30 years' experience.
- **Online feedback:** Martin Robey Group provides a dedicated office space for apprentices to complete their learning one day a week. Through Train'd Up's online portal Connor and Leigh can easily see and track the progress of apprentices.
- **In person reviews:** In addition to the online tracking, Connor and Leigh have meetings every 8-12 weeks with Nick Andrews, Engineering Assessor, and bi-monthly meetings with the Head of Engineering and other members of the Train'd Up team to go through student progress.

Results – the benefits of working with Train'd Up

In spring 2025, Martin Robey Group completed its first year working with Train'd Up. Currently three apprentices are working at the company supported by Train'd Up. They have completed their level 2 in Metal Fabrication and are moving onto level 3.

Finley, who's dad is Foreman, had initially looked to do a degree in accounting but following experience with the company over the summer period he decided he wanted to explore a career in engineering.

Bradley has worked at Martin Robey from age 16. He had previously failed his functional skills at college but passed first time during his apprenticeship with support from Train'd Up.

Jack had also previously failed an apprenticeship through college. But again, through the partnership between Martin Robey and Train'd Up, he passed with flying colours.

Due to the fantastic results and working relationship, Martin Robey Group is looking to undertake more apprenticeships with Train'd Up, as well as putting learners on to HNCs to further support their learning journey.

To find out more about Train'd Up's novel approach to apprenticeship training and the courses available visit: www.traindup.org

Client Feedback

Connor Knight, Apprentice Co-Ordinator at Martin Robey Group, shared his experience of working with Train'd Up: "It's been a real eye opener to the benefits of online training, having previously only worked alongside colleges.

"The service from Train'd Up is second to none and has truly been the best experience for both Leigh and I as training supervisors, and also for the students listening to their comments.

"I especially love the online feedback element, as it's **clear to navigate** and we can track the progress of all students so there are no surprises and if there are any issues they can be addressed – which gives us **peace of mind**.

"For me, having experience myself in industry and as an apprentice, I enjoy my role now to see the students going from a kid to an adult! That progression is **really fulfilling** and to have the Train'd Up team to support them on their journey is **really beneficial**."

The logo for Martin Robey Group features the name 'Martin Robey' in a large, stylized, red script font. Below it, the word 'GROUP' is written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.