



Brisbane transport and logistics company sets up future by training today

Any family-owned Australian company that's been operating since 1932 must have a secret or two for success, and for J.J Richards and Sons it's all about their people.

As one of the largest waste management firms in the country, J.J Richards' focus on safety, reliability and customer service excellence is only possible thanks to a drive to recruit, train and retain quality staff. Apprentice Manager James (Jimmy) Southwood said this process now focuses on school-based apprentices and trainees.

"At J.J Richards we recognise that partnering with schools and taking on trainees and apprentices is one way to counter the lack of skilled tradespeople in the transport and logistics industry," Jimmy said.

"By collaborating with several schools in Brisbane and Logan we've boosted our workforce and created sustainable job opportunities that provide a stable school-to-work transition for young people. This doesn't happen by accident though - success comes from a diligent effort by everyone involved - the school, trainee/apprentice, registered training organisation and employer."

A trainee/ apprentice may be employed full-time or part-time and relevant training can be delivered completely on-the-job or as a combination of off-site and in the workplace by your chosen registered training organisation.

Jimmy recommends shopping around for a TAFE or private training provider because all are different and the training will be most effective when it combines the needs of the employer, learning style of the apprentice and the requirements of a specific traineeship/apprenticeship.

"Workplace support is very important too - we have an induction program and appoint a mentor

for every trainee/apprentice. We give quarterly work appraisals, meet periodically with each school and have designated training areas onsite," Jimmy said.

"To promote some healthy competition we also nominate the trainee/apprentice who performs most consistently during their four years for a Queensland Training Award."

A trade and teaching background has also helped Jimmy promote traineeships/apprenticeships as a legitimate alternative to mainstream learning. Some students flourish in the workplace during on-the-job training, however he concedes that hiring school-based trainees/apprentices can have associated challenges.

"Some schools may be reluctant to give additional time to student apprentices and trainees because they lack knowledge of employer and training requirements, or due to curriculum demands," Jimmy said.

"These problems can be easily solved by ensuring an awareness of the expectations and needs of all involved from the outset."

For general information on apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland, visit www.apprenticeshipsinfo.qld.gov.au or contact Apprenticeships Info on 1800 210 210.

For specific information on transport and logistics, contact Industry Capability, Department of Transport and Main Roads via industry.capability@tmr.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3306 6785.