



## Case Study

Kesslers International Ltd. is an East London based company employing 250 people in a multi-skilled, ethnically diverse workforce, including 14 Apprentices.

The company specialises in the design and manufacture of point-of-purchase display units for major brands, retailers and information providers such as Christian Dior, Swatch, Tesco, the Employment Service and high street banks.

Turnover is around £18 million, 10% of which is export and currently it is one of London's largest manufacturing companies.

The Apprenticeship programme meets the company's specific needs. Working with external training providers ensures that Kesslers is always up to date with latest technologies and best practice.

Apprentices in their 3rd and 4th year not only learn from their peers and managers but also pass skills back to them, e.g. better programming and cutting methods. This happens particularly when they go on to HND and further courses.

The company was the Learning and Skills Council's Small and Medium-Sized Employer of the Year in 2007 and 'Best Employer of Apprentices in Greater London' in 2009.

*"For a medium-sized company like mine, it is essential to have effective workforce strategies. Apprenticeships help me find, keep and develop the people I need to make my business successful."*

**George Kessler CBE** Joint Deputy Chairman

### Career development

The programme has also given Kesslers a longer term benefit: over the 8 years it has been running, it has supplied the next generation of shift managers and supplemented an ageing workforce by bringing in younger skilled people.

### Productivity

Final year apprentices have run projects that reduced setting times (the time taken to change a machine running on a particular programme to another set-up) in one area by 20% and increased Overall Equipment Effectiveness (the time that a machine is running) in another area by 15%.

### Increased competitiveness

Since introducing the Apprenticeship scheme, Kesslers has seen a dramatic improvement in speed of response and customer service.

Change programmes are essential to a manufacturing business and younger people often enjoy the challenge that change brings.

### Higher employee satisfaction

Many managers and older employees have taken particular pride in working with the apprentices, both in teaching them and helping them where they have difficulties such as with maths.

### Diversity

Kesslers employs a multi-ethnic workforce, approximately 30-35% of the staff have various ethnic backgrounds. Apprentices also tend to progress into the ranks of junior management faster than the majority of the work force.

Since the apprentice mix is also multi-ethnic, the effect of this has been that the company has a more diverse middle management than they had previously, approximately 10%.