

The BUZZ

The latest training and recruitment news

May 2024, Issue 4



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Swarm Bluewater is Launched

Celebrating our Apprentices

Tutor Spotlight

Focus on Payroll

Well-Being at Work

Recruitment Update

Competition Time!

We nurture growth and celebrate success



Welcome to the May 2024 issue of The BUZZ.

I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself as editor of The Buzz.

As a Marketing tutor at Swarm it's always a pleasure to hear of the achievements of my apprentices as they complete their EPA, but when pulling together each issue of the newsletter, I get to appreciate the wider successes across the whole company. As we can read about in this issue, many learners face challenges of all kinds during their course, and as tutors it's our job to support them, guide them and bring out the best in each individual.

From my perspective, it's clear that our team really do all strive for this outcome; we believe in our students, even when they doubt themselves.

An exciting time lies ahead at Swarm as we introduce new qualifications, like the Level 3 Content Creator, and we announce the launch of Swarm Bluewater, which builds on our ethos of valuing people and developing a culture that appreciates individual talents.

Sally Walters, Marketing and Business Administrator Tutor



Swarm Bluewater is Launched!

We are excited to announce the launch of Swarm Bluewater, as part of the Swarm Group.

With an ever increasing complex business environment, the need for skilled leadership and management has never been greater. If businesses of all sizes are not only to survive, but **thrive** in the current 'great resignation' climate and rapidly changing landscape, then these skills will be key.

According to a 25 year Gallup study, up to 70% of an organisations' employees perceive their work environment based on the behaviours and actions of their managers, therefore, great leadership and management can be the difference between an engaging and productive workforce or a toxic workplace with poor retention and constant complications!

The idea for Swarm Bluewater was born out of an obsession with how leadership and management can give organisations competitive advantage through retaining

great people, forming productive cultures, and therefore leading to highly effective operations.

The three co-founders of Bluewater have vast experience in training, leadership, management and business consultancy. They are backed up by an incredible team of specialists, trainers and coaches, so are perfectly placed to offer a service which covers both general and executive management, and one that identifies the **actual** needs of the organisation, rather than just offering an off-the-shelf solution.

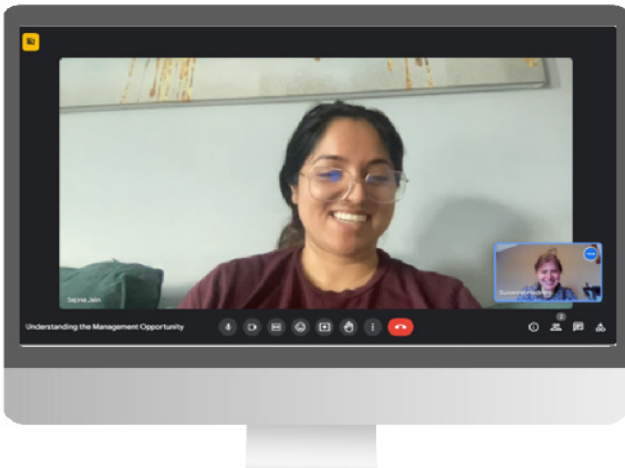
Bluewater's approach is to provide an initial, free, in depth consultation to identify skills gaps and organisational needs, along with post course coaching to embed learning if required.

For more information, visit www.swarmbluewater.co.uk or email info@swarmgroup.org.uk.

Author: Harry Harris

N E W S

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT



Our business tutors are passionate about their subject and often like to help out in the business community where they can. This is especially needed in places where access to skills training is hard to come by and the means to pay for it is low.

A little free mentoring and problem solving support can really help where someone is struggling with a challenge or just starting out in business and unsure where to turn.

In March, our Business Improvement Tutor, Suzanne, offered a free mentoring session for anyone in the world who saw the offer and needed an extra helping hand.

“If I know something that will help”, says Suzanne, “then, of course, I would like to help!”

That day, she reached all the way to Canada, and was able to offer guidance for a lady trying to start her own business and not sure where to begin.

BACK TO SCHOOL!

Our Engagement Team found themselves back at school again!

Louie and Dale enjoyed attending the Careers Fair at Sheringham Sixth Form, in Norfolk, last week.

They helped to bust some myths around apprenticeships, by enlightening around 40 sixth form pupils on what courses are on offer, how the programmes are structured, and the benefits of embarking on an Apprenticeship.

On this occasion, both Louie and Dale escaped a detention....



CELEBRATING OUR APPRENTICES

We love to celebrate the successes of our apprentices!

Ryan Harris is currently on a Content Creator Apprenticeship with Swarm, and working at Amelix Academy.

As well as creating content to promote the academy's eSports course, he also supports the students by arranging and participating in gaming tournaments.

Their Esports team, The Canterbury Rocketeers, have successfully completed their first official championship and finished in the top 15!

To mark the success, Ryan created this TikTok video, which will also count towards his final portfolio.

How wonderful to work in an area you are passionate about!



[Click to watch Ryan's TikTok video!](#)



This is fantastic to hear!

Inspired by our Personal Development sessions, and motivated by his tutor, Elle Vernon, Jamie Sayer decided to deliver his own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion session in the workplace for his colleagues.

This type of activity doesn't come easily to Jamie, as he is extremely shy and hasn't always found it easy talking to large groups.

Jamie, who is based at The Graphene Company (London) Ltd, and studying for the Team Leader Apprenticeship, has decided to make these Personal Development sessions a regular event.

So delighted is the company with his progress, that they treated Jamie to American NFL game at Wembley!

Well done Jamie!

Apprentices can face all kinds of challenges through their course. Our job is to support them to overcome these hurdles, restore their confidence and get them back on track.

We are so pleased for Kavita Bhatti, who was a Business Administrator Level 3 learner employed at National Express.

Whilst facing redundancy, not only did she pass her EPA with flying colours, she also gained her Functional Skills in maths, during the process.

Although Kavita was eventually made redundant during her apprenticeship, her line manager, Russ, and tutor, Elle Vernon, continued to support her throughout the course and prepared her well for her assessment.

Following her redundancy, Kavita was inundated with job offers and now works as an HR administrator.

With the Distinction and a maths qualification under her belt she is now looking forward to planning her wedding in September!



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT



Tutor: Rebecca Evers

Subject: Business Administrator and Improvement Practitioner

"I wish to say a big thank you to Rebecca Evers, who supported, encouraged and kept pushing me to keep going forward. Rebecca always checked on my mental health and led me right to the end of the apprenticeship."

Sarune Zalepugaite

Sanctuary Personnel Ltd

How long have you worked for Swarm?

I have worked for Swarm since August 2022.

What was your career prior to tutoring?

I have always worked in education, in some capacity, starting as a freelance Drama practitioner in Primary Schools. I then completed my PGCE in Secondary Drama and taught in a Secondary school in Surrey for 5 years. After a year off for some much needed travelling, I returned to Norwich and worked as an Administrator for the Norfolk & Norwich Festival.

Since having my children I have worked for another apprenticeship training provider and ran my own Creative Learning Education business with my fellow Swarmer Helen, before joining Swarm in 2022.

What do you enjoy about your role at Swarm?

I really enjoy working with a range of people from every walk of life, from all over the country, supporting them to achieve their goals.

I love the flexibility that Swarm offers me whilst juggling work and parenting and the never ending experiences and opportunities available to me.

What are the challenges of your role?

Ensuring that all learners can access the learning, and that all employers are engaged and invested in their apprentices.

How do you spend your spare time?

I have two young daughters who keep me busy! I play hockey weekly for a local team, I run and love cold water swimming, especially in the sea. I love reading and am a member of a book club and enjoy travelling, camping and experiencing new places, with my family.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about reading! And spending time with my family and friends.

Tell us something that may surprise us about you?

When I was a teenager I went to Russia and camped by the river Volga for a week on a Guide camp!

CULTIVATING HAPPINESS AT WORK

The [2024 World Happiness Report](#) has unveiled Finland as home to the happiest people, followed by Denmark. (Notably all five Nordic countries are in the top ten). This is hardly surprising when we consider how much emphasis the Nordic nations place on outdoor living, environmental stewardship, family time, and the pursuit of work life balance. Denmark has a high level of equality in society and a sense of shared responsibility for social welfare; factors which, according to the report contribute to happiness all across the world. It's no wonder they have a word for encapsulating that wonderful cosy feeling of togetherness: Hygge.

The report also sheds light on a worrying trend: whilst in most regions across the world, the young are happier than the old, youth happiness is in decline (especially in North America.)

We know that social support and isolation can play a critical role in our happiness. As societal structures evolve, with fewer nuclear families and geographic mobility becoming commonplace, the support network for older generations has diminished, and with it, social connection. Working from home also isolates us further.

Just as nations that prioritise well-being achieve higher levels of happiness, it follows that organisations that support their employees' well-being maintain a happier workforce.

Ways to achieve this include:

- Fostering a sense of equality and inclusion
- Offering flexible working arrangements
- Providing well-being support programmes
- Celebrating employees contribution with recognition awards
- Offering career progression and upskilling opportunities

At Swarm, we offer Personal Development workshops, encouraging apprentices to take ownership of their own health and well-being. Embarking on a new course, and in many cases, a new job at the same time can induce stress and anxiety, so it's important to have coping strategies in place.

Employers can support their apprentices by:

- Sharing resources for those who appear to be struggling
- Check in regularly with apprentices. Enquire about their course and if they can manage their workload.
- Implementing a buddy or mentoring programme for new employees.
- Set goals and acknowledge achievements.
- Attend Progress Review meetings with your apprentice and training provider to keep up to date with any areas of concern.
- Increase support around the time of their End Point Assessment. This can be a stressful time for apprentices, especially as they are balancing their daily work with assessment preparation.

If you'd like to discuss this further with your apprentice's tutor, [do please get in touch](#).

You can read the full article [here](#).



NEW LAW TO PROTECT WORK LIFE BALANCE

Australia has just passed new legislation granting employees the right to disconnect from work outside of business hours.

The law is in response to growing concerns about work-related mental health issues, and the calls to create more rigid boundaries between work and home life.

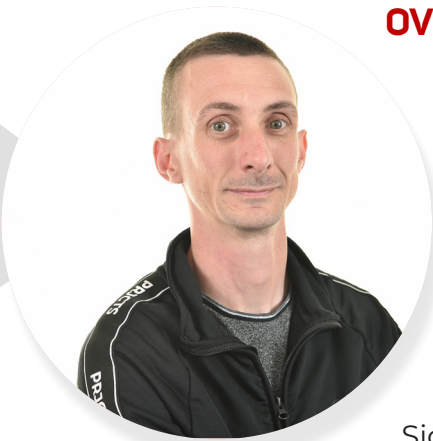
Factors to consider when contacting employees outside of work are:

- the level of responsibility
- the method of communication
- the urgency of the matter.



Other countries have adopted similar legislation including France, Italy and Belgium.

Do you think the UK will and should follow?



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: Neil celebrates achieving his goal

Neil McLean, an employee at physical activity charity [Active Lancashire](#), is currently studying a Level 4 Market Research Executive apprenticeship with Swarm Training.

As part of the apprenticeship requirements, Neil had to complete a Functional Skills Qualification in mathematics before he could progress to the final stage of the course; Neil felt that this presented additional difficulties as he had struggled with mathematics during school. Neil's tutor, Siobhan Smith, was able to support Neil in accessing one-to-one mathematics tutoring through Swarm Training, and provided him with self-study materials and mock tests which quickly saw Neil's knowledge and confidence increase.

Neil went on to pass his qualification in April 2024, something which he, his colleagues and the Swarm team are immensely proud of. Siobhan adds "I'm so pleased that Neil ultimately stepped up and took ownership of his maths learning and his progress throughout the apprenticeship. Neil's achievement - with Active Lancashire's support - demonstrates that he can determine his own success; an empowering position to be in."

His line manager, Callum Webster, Research and Insight Officer at Active Lancashire added, "Neil has always had a good aptitude for the work he does, he is a hard, detail-orientated worker and is a pleasure to line manage.

Myself and the rest of the team are proud of Neil's achievement, and how he has been able to gain his Functional Skills in maths whilst working, studying, and looking after his young children at home. We're happy to support Neil in gaining his apprenticeship, and look forward to seeing the rest of his journey!"

You can read Neil's story [here](#).

FOCUS ON PAYROLL

Course: **Payroll Administrator Level 3**

Duration: **18 Months + up to 4 months of EPA**

Requirements: **Apprentices without level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment.**

"I recently completed my apprenticeship in Payroll Administrator Level 3 with Swarm and I am delighted to share my positive experience.

From the onset, the apprenticeship program offered by Swarm stood out for its comprehensive curriculum and hands-on approach to learning. The well-structured content ensured a thorough understanding of payroll processes, legislative requirements, and practical application in real-world scenarios. The blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills has undoubtedly equipped me with the expertise needed for a successful career in payroll.

My tutor Ana Valatkiene demonstrated a profound knowledge of the subject, effectively translating complex concepts into digestible information. She exhibited great flexibility and adaptability, catering to individual learning styles and needs. Ana provided timely feedback on assignments, offering constructive criticism to help me continually improve. This personalised attention and commitment to my progress were instrumental in my successful completion of the apprenticeship.

Thank you for the support throughout the apprenticeship. I highly recommend the courses offered by Swarm Training."

Krzysztofa Chronowska

The Role:

This apprenticeship develops the skills and competences for Payroll Administrators.

Payroll Administrators will typically have responsibility for setting up and operating the Payroll within the organisation in which they are employed or on behalf of another organisation.

The role may be located within a business/organisation or in a payroll bureau, bookkeeping or accounting practice, or professional services company. The job may sit within the HR or Finance function.

The Course:

Topics covered include:

- Systems and Processes
- Legislative Framework
- Data Analysis
- Communication and Collaboration
- Ethics and Integrity
- Customer Awareness
- Planning
- Payroll Technical
- Systems and Processes



If you'd like to know more about this course, please contact us.

Email: enquiries@swarmgroup.org.uk

Phone: 0800 0868199



OUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MARKET

Our Recruitment Team have witnessed these changes during the month:

- ↓ • DOWN: Job vacancies are now at a 3 year low.
- ↓ • DOWN: There has been a year on year 25% drop in vacancies!
- ↑ • UP: Swarm Training has seen an increase in companies looking to upskill staff.
- ↑ • UP: Applicants have gone up by 20% year on year.

So, BIG changes in the market, which underlines the need to make quality applications and approaches if you are looking for a new role.

DO YOU NEED SUPPORT?

If you are a job seeker, there is plenty of helpful information on the Swarm Recruitment website: www.swarmrecruitment.org.uk.

OUT AND ABOUT

Although we can provide remote training all across the UK via video, our tutors like to get out and about if the geography allows it! Last month, our Business Administrator tutor, Rebecca Evers, went to visit her apprentices working at Sanctuary Personnel. She had a great day, and was made to feel very welcome.

She took the opportunity to ask Niamh what she thought about her apprenticeship and her experience with Swarm. [Take a look:](#)





NEW CPD ACCREDITATION with Rebecca Rivett

Swarm Training is delighted to announce that our business has been approved for CPD accreditation. Rebecca Rivett explains,

“As Director of Operations and Safeguarding, I am constantly seeking ways to enhance our training delivery, enabling tutors to find joy in their work and learners to experience a profoundly positive impact.

Our CPD status means we can further elevate our training programmes and have our professional development sessions accredited, adding even more value to our existing offerings. I look forward to sharing further updates as this journey unfolds.”

Rebecca and her colleague, Teo Apan, recently delivered a webinar on Safeguarding for Highfields, which was well attended and received really positive feedback.



COMPETITION TIME!

All those years ago, when Swarm began, Robert Ashton came up with the idea of offering apprenticeship opportunities to budding entrepreneurs struggling to find mentors to help them take their next steps. Today Robert is celebrating the launch of his new book, **'Where are the Fellows Who Cut the Hay?'** It's the product of both a lifelong interest in the work of Suffolk writer and oral historian, George Ewart Evans, and a creative writing MA, from which Robert graduated in 2020.

In the book Robert shares some of the stories Evans collected, about how life in rural Britain was 100 years ago, adds some of his own experiences from 50 years ago, and introduces people who today, are bringing back almost forgotten ways as we all adapt to the threat of climate change.

The book was launched at Blaxhall in Suffolk, the village where Evans wrote *Ask the Fellows who Cut the Hay*, the book for which he is best remembered.

Win a Signed Copy

We have 10 signed copies of the book to give away! To be in with a chance of winning a copy, just answer the question,

What year did Evans write his book, 'Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay'?

Email your answer to marketing@swarmgroup.org.uk before 31 May 2024, along with your name and postal address. Winner will be notified by email. No cash alternative.

