

***"We have a drive to promote from within. If there are good people in our workshop, parts department etc, they will potentially make great managers, because they know our business and the way we operate"***

# Growing their own



**Truck dealer group Motus Commercials has launched a formal internal training programme for mid-level managers, and another first-line management course for qualified apprentices, Will Dalrymple reports**

**M**otus Commercials, understood to be DAF's largest independent dealer, employs 1,300 people across 32 dealer sites in an arc from Scotland down to the South West. It takes in 50 Level 3 heavy goods vehicle apprentices every year, linked to individual dealerships. The scheme is managed by DAF apprentice provider Skillnet, and supported by City of Bristol College for block-release education.

As apprentices come toward the end of the course, Motus starts to plan their future direction. Those who are keen to push on to master tech will be sent on manufacturer training programmes to build their technical competence.

Those more interested in progressing into management have been trained on a non-Levy-funded Level 4 management programme from the automotive world. But this year it has begun the first of two bespoke programmes developed with training provider Learning Skills Partnership.

Come January 2022, the first group of 12 staff members take their first step toward line management by starting a Level 3 team leader apprenticeship.

They follow a cohort of more experienced managers who began in July the company's first Level 5 management course, 'Operations and Departmental Manager' with an eye toward progressing into senior manager or director roles.

"What we find in particular with our workshops is that there are lots



of fantastic people that are experts in their field who have come into management roles without any development in people management, understanding human resources processes, budgeting or financial requirements," states people partnership manager Sarah Bardens, who manages Motus's apprenticeships.

She says that the company chose to begin with the older cohort first to send a positive message about training through the company: apprenticeships are not just for school leavers. She adds: "Apprenticeships are for everybody. That's where as a nation we have a lot of work to do."

The new apprenticeships lasts between 18-24 months. Participants meet virtually for four hours every three to four weeks in tutor-led sessions on managing people and developing relationships, operational and project management, finance, decisionmaking, and other skills. Toward the latter

stage of the courses apprentices go through an end-point assessment.

In the Level 5 apprenticeship, learners are drawn from roles such as workshop, service, parts, sales and aftersales managers in different areas of the business. "It's great for them from a practical sense, because the networking may benefit their career," Bardens points out.

She says that these two schemes are just some of the formal training offerings being developed, which also include the new road transport engineering manager Level 4 technical qualification, and other courses for more commercial staff such as service advisors, as well as job functions less linked to apprenticeships in the past.

Part of the company's motivation is standardisation, as the group further consolidates its operations after acquisitions and site upgrades, the most recent a major relocation in Avonmouth in July. It acquired F&G Commercials in 2019.

Bardens, who works out of the Motus Commercials head office in Derby, says: "We want to make sure we offer the same level of service to customers from Scotland to Somerset, and equally that our colleagues are given the same level of development wherever they are across the UK."

Another motivation is to offer staff opportunities for internal mobility. "We have a drive to promote from within. If there are good people in our workshop, parts department etc, they will potentially make great managers, because they know our business and the way we operate." **TE**