

Association of Professional Sales

PRESS RELEASE: GENERAL QUALIFICATION APPROVED FOR UK SALESPeOPLE

November 28: The Association of Professional Sales is delighted to announce that a major hurdle has been passed by the new apprenticeship qualification that it has been championing for sales executives.

The independent Institute for Apprenticeships has approved the standard, or list of competencies, for the Sales Executive Apprenticeship - a post-A Level qualification for everyone at the sharp end of sales.

The APS believes that all sales people should aspire to be qualified and members of their professional body. To achieve this, it has devoted itself to pioneering new apprenticeships in sales. The first apprentices have already begun work and study on a Level 6, BSc Hons course on Professional Practice in B2B Sales, suitable for sales leaders.

Now, with this latest success, the outline of an apprenticeship has been designed at Level 4 that is aimed at the vast number of people who work in sales. The APS intends it as a recruiting tool to help employers attract the brightest school-leavers into the profession; and also a way of rewarding experienced sellers, who wish to further their careers and have their skills recognised through formal learning.

The APS has chosen to champion apprenticeships, in order to benefit sales professionals by helping them to reclaim some of the extra £340m tax bill their employers face under the apprenticeship levy*.

The next step to make the Sales Executive Apprenticeship (SEA) a reality is for training courses to be constructed to deliver the qualification. Already, the APS is working with leading sales training organisations such as Miller Heiman, Huthwaite International, Mercuri, Fieldstar, Imparta, Blue Sky, Pareto Law, Oxford College of Marketing, **SBR Consulting** and the Professional Academy, to ensure that employers can get outstanding sales training and expertise as part of the apprenticeship.

Huge thanks are due on behalf of the sales profession to the organisations on the Trailblazer steering group that compiled the SEA standard. They include Bauer Media, GlaxoSmithKline, Pepsico, Warburton's, Level 3, BT, CPM, Whitbread and Korus. The group was led by chairman James Gotch, UK & Nordics MD for Marcolin.

"Without these organisations, we would not now have a standard that is fit for purpose across most selling environments, and has the credibility of being backed by some of the largest businesses on the planet," said Ben Turner, general manager of the APS.

The new qualification will be an 18 month apprenticeship, demonstrating the value that the UK government now places on the skills of UK sellers. To be counted a "sales professional" a long programme of learning needs to take place, in the government's view. This mirrors the APS's own

stance, that sales is a highly skilled profession that cannot be learnt overnight and requires continuous learning.

The Association of Professional Sales will also be the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) for this apprenticeship, overseeing and ensuring the quality of provider and experience. All students who successfully complete their SEA will thus be recognised by the APS as their professional body by receiving APS professional sales qualifications.

Successful apprentices will also receive APS membership, enabling them to share best practice with peers in the profession, and supporting them to continue learning throughout their career through Continual Professional Development (CPD).

“The APS is the only independent organisation that understands the needs of global sales organisations and can therefore assess, validate and recognise sellers across providers, companies, and countries,” said Mr Turner.

“The APS is delighted to have led and supported this initiative, which clearly we fully support on behalf of our members and the wider profession. Sales people across the UK are contributing around £340m into the levy pot, so to be able to make this available for their learning is a great achievement for all those involved.”

MORE DETAILS

If you are an employer who would like to know more about the apprenticeship, and how it could support your academy and internal L&D structure, as well as support your wider L&D requirements across the sales organisation, contact Ben Turner, General Manager of the APS
ben.turner@the-aps.com

NOTES

* All corporates with a wage bill in excess of £3 million are required to pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, as of April 1, 2017. The only way companies can claim back their contribution to the levy is by running a government-approved apprenticeship scheme. The APS has pioneered the way in developing such apprenticeships.