

## Careers and Skills – Yamazaki Mazak – Transcript

Gary Woodman: Interviewer – CEO of the Worcester Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP)

Chris Morris: Interviewee – Apprentice and Future Workforce Training Manager - Yamazaki Mazak

Gary Woodman: Hello my name is Gary Woodman, I'm chief executive of the Worcester local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and welcome to this episode of the Making Connections Skills and Careers podcast series from the Career's Hub Team. Can you tell us a little bit about your company and what you do there?

Chris Morris: My name is Chris Morris and I'm the Apprentice and Future Workforce Training Manager at Yamazaki Mazak UK limited. Yamazaki Mazak has been in existence since 1919 and we are the world leaders in the manufacture of high precision CNC machine tools. Our European headquarters is based in Worcester and we employ around 800 people at our UK manufacturing facility and around 8000 worldwide.

Gary Woodman: And can you tell us a little bit about the sector and industry that you work in and why it's such an exciting place to work and develop a career in?

Chris Morris: We are placed within the engineering and manufacturing sectors supplying our machine tools to a range of companies across industries including automotive, aerospace, energy lifestyle and medical. Our customers could be using our machines to produce anything that you can think of from the gearbox in a helicopter to the nose cone on a Formula One car. Designer belt buckles, ski boots, knee joints and everything in between.

Gary Woodman: And what's the thing that really drives you and makes you proud to work for your company and the role that you do?

Chris Morris: I am very fortunate to have a fantastic role at Mazak and I love my job. I get to meet and engage with so many different people that are just thinking about all starting their careers. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than seeing apprentices or former apprentices progressing and working their way up the business. The company itself is forward thinking and looks after its staff. There are so many opportunities and I challenge our apprentices to make the most of them when they arise.

Gary Woodman: what are the roles that currently exist within your business and how wide in terms of variety and skills are they?

Chris Morris: Naturally as an engineering company, most of our roles are factory based and engineering biased such as, sheet metal workers, machinists, maintenance, electrical and mechanical engineering. But most people think that just because we have an engineering company there are just engineering roles on offer. For instance, we have roles within it finance, marketing, sales, administration and HR to name but a few.

Gary Woodman: And if we are thinking about skills for the future what sort of roles do you think will you see in your company, as we move through past COVID, but into a far more digital world?

Chris Morris: I would like to think that many of the roles that are currently in place at Mazak will still be required in the future. However, as with many factories it is clear that automation and robotics are the future, and this will create many opportunities. Therefore, we will need people that can maintain, programme and operate them.

Gary Woodman: And how would a young person enter into your organisation and then watch their opportunity to grow through that organisation?

Chris Morris: There are a number of routes into the organisation, as already mentioned, there is the apprenticeship route. We also occasionally take on University graduates. There are also traditional advertisements for roles that people may see on our websites or through our various agencies.

Gary Woodman: And do you think its skills or qualification that employers are looking for form a potential employee?

Chris Morris: There are certain skills that we will always demand such as, being able to communicate clearly in all forms. Being able to motivate yourself to keep on top of both college work and Mazak requirements. Being able to meet deadlines and more importantly, having that can-do attitude. We can teach you how to build a machine tool, but we can't teach you how to have that get up and go. For a Mazak apprenticeship I would be looking for GCSE grades of grade 4 in English and the Sciences and then grade 5 in maths, as it could be quite challenging. It is also useful if you've studied Resistant Materials, DT or Engineering but, we do appreciate that not all schools are able to offer these subjects.

Gary Woodman: What would be your top tips for young people today?

Chris Morris: It's really important that you ensure that your CV is tailored to the role that you're looking for. I'll see a lot of applications for engineering roles that showed no evidence that engineering is a role that they have a passion for. A lot of young people may say that don't have any work experience if they've just left school but show some initiative and spend some time with the local garage. If you got a family member who is an electrician, get out there spend some time with them. You may not be appropriate for job applications but I'm happy to see photos and evidence of the kind of things that you may have done. As the old saying goes, pictures speak a 1000 words and acts as a discussion point. Finally, do we research. The amount of applicants I interview who haven't got a clue what we do is disheartening at times. However, they are outweighed by the fantastic enthusiastic people have the pleasure of meeting each year.

Gary Woodman: And finally, do you have any open days or events when young people could come and see the work environment because it's very different from school or college and therefore, getting them to come out and see environment and where you do your work I think is very important. Are there any opportunities for them to come and see that?

Chris Morris: We are committed to developing the future workforce through our commitment to providing apprenticeships. Our outreach activities range from offsite careers events to on site factory tours. Our nationally recognised and award-winning industrial cadets work experience scheme has enabled nearly 200 diverse students to access accredited work experience, with 98% of rating it as either excellent or very good. This is firmly established with eight local schools. Furthermore, I am a Local Enterprise Advisor. We strongly believe that we have developed a first-rate apprenticeship programme that we are incredibly proud of. This is shown through the number of applicants we are receiving for engineering roles which, have shown a year on year increase. We have an award-winning scheme with award-winning apprentices.

Gary Woodman: If you're a young person listening make sure you go to the skills for Worcestershire website where you can find a range of support on offer to help you decide the career pathway for you. So that's [www.skills4worcestershire.co.uk](http://www.skills4worcestershire.co.uk). Thanks for listening.