

Extract from an article entitled 'Young, gifted & jobless' published on pages 23 to 25 of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) publication 'First Voice of Business' April/May 2011

2 FROM INTERN TO STAR EMPLOYEE AT A SOUTH WALES CONSULTANCY

One of our newest consultants, Robert Gutrai, initially spent eight weeks with us as a graduate intern last year. He went back to the University of Plymouth to complete his MSc in Environmental Consultancy and joined us on a permanent basis in November 2010.

We specialise in compliance consultancy and training for quality, health and safety, and environmental management. Robert's MSc required him to have an eight-week work placement and because we'd done some environmental consultancy for the university, he really wanted to join us. At the time, we thought we were doing it to help out the university

more than anything else, but he did a really good job and turned out to be a brilliant fit.

The scheme was arranged through the University of Plymouth and there was basically no cost, apart from our time and National Insurance Contributions. The value of the work he did which he was with us would probably equate to between £3,000 and £4,000 – a significant saving. We found that it was a really good, low-risk way to find somebody and try them out, even though we weren't even looking to recruit at the time. By the time we were looking to recruit, we'd already seen that he was capable, confident, professional and presentable in front of clients and able to do research. That's a huge advantage over the traditional recruitment route and has worked out really well for us.

If the time was right, we would absolutely do it again. As a small company, there is a limit on how often you can bring people in by virtue of the fact that if you want to do it right, you need to have other members of the team available to supervise and support them and give them the right kind of guidance. When we've had work experience interns in the past, they generally go on to make the best workers, because they have the 'get up and go' to organise an internship in the first place to further their career and not necessarily earn a fortune

from it. I think it would be a real shame if this scheme is scrapped for good. Robert is clear proof that you can get somebody who will go on to be a real asset to the business.

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