

The case for apprenticeships in 2023

5 statistics that leaders
can't afford to ignore



What's inside:

1. Learn why businesses are embracing apprenticeships to close skill gaps and build a more equitable future
2. Real-world success story: How Just Eat is accelerating careers through data upskilling
3. How to leverage the power of apprenticeships in your business





A transformation is taking place in the working world

Apprenticeships are more prestigious and popular than ever, as the UK's leading employers increasingly rethink the way they attract and train top talent.

The impact of this growth can't be understated. Apprenticeships offer boundless development opportunities, enabling apprentices to learn on the job while earning a living. They also have an important role to play in building more diverse and inclusive teams, giving opportunities to those who may not have access to the traditional career path.

And with the data and tech skills gap showing no sign of relenting, they're also delivering business impact — by providing the future skills most needed by employers.

In this report, we outline the business case for apprenticeships, and share our new research findings on how the UK public and SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) perceive the apprenticeships model.

It's time to embrace apprenticeships in 2023.

Methodology

This report features findings from the following Multiverse reports:

From Dismissed to Desirable: The Changing Perception of Apprenticeships: On behalf of Multiverse, Stack Data Strategy conducted two separate survey research studies. Both studies relied on online interviews.

In the first study, Stack polled 1,517 adults across England between November 7 and 11, 2022. Data for this study was weighted to age / gender (interlocked), educational attainment, region, and past voting behaviour to ensure nationally representative results. In a second study, Stack polled 1,006 individuals in decision-making functions in small and medium sized enterprises between November 8 and 16. The reported results of this study are unweighted.

Making Every Data Minute Count:

In this market insight report, Multiverse and DataIQ surveyed a panel of 101 data leaders during May and June 2021. Read the findings in full here.

Defining a New Way to Train and Hire for Today's Employers:

Multiverse surveyed 300 UK Multiverse apprentices to establish a baseline understanding of the impact of the apprenticeship program on workforce preparedness, career progression and success and financial standing.

#1: Businesses are turning to apprenticeships to recruit top talent

Our research shows: **A third of SMEs are likely to hire an apprentice in the next year**

Apprenticeships have become an increasingly popular hiring choice among businesses, with 5.3 million apprentices placed in England since 2010.

The route is also growing in prestige — in part due to the UK's largest and most recognisable employers, like Google, KPMG and the NHS, embracing apprenticeship programmes to hire, train and develop their people.

The benefits are wide-reaching. Apprenticeships offer applied learning that takes place on the job, allowing apprentices to earn a wage and avoid student debt. This model helps apprentices grow skills and knowledge quickly in a way that adds value to both learners and the businesses that take them on.

And roles aren't limited to those traditionally linked with the apprenticeships model.

Apprentice starts at tech companies were up 15.8% in the last year¹, creating new routes into fields like software engineering, data analytics and business transformation.

In 2023 and beyond, the continued growth of apprenticeships is likely to be driven by the 1.4m SMEs with employees in the UK. In our latest research report, *The Changing Perception of Apprenticeships*, we found that 34% plan to hire an apprentice in the year ahead.

We also revealed that **SMEs that have taken on an apprentice see them as a crucial part of their business** — eight in ten (78%) say hiring an apprentice has been a positive experience. Businesses said that the process exceeded their expectations in critical areas like:

- Apprentices' ability to learn on the job
- Ease of finding the right candidate
- The cost of hiring

¹UK Government: Apprenticeships in England by industry characteristics

#2: The skills gap is preventing progress —but apprenticeships offer a solution

Our research shows:



of annual revenue is being lost as a result of data and digital skills gaps

Businesses around the world are feeling the impact of a lack of digital and data skills – and the problem is only growing. 87% of organisations report they either currently have a skills gap or expect to have one in the next few years.²

For leaders driving transformational change, skills gaps aren't just a roadblock to progress. They're also directly impacting the bottom line. In our report, *Making Every Data Minute Count*, we revealed that 8.5% of annual revenue is lost on average as a result of poor data literacy.

So how are leaders tackling the problem? The majority are choosing to invest in their people. According to PWC, **56% of leaders have plans to upskill their workforce in technology in 2023**, with a further 48% planning to increase investment in attracting tech talent this year.

The trend is reflected in the data industry – where leaders are turning to apprenticeships as a solution. In our survey of data leaders, 62% said they were currently focusing on hard skills training, with **over a third (35%) planning data apprenticeships to fill their skills gaps**.

By building a strong pipeline of data and digital talent and upskilling existing employees, apprenticeships can help businesses build their internal capabilities – empowering their people with the skills to improve productivity, increase efficiency and identify new revenue streams.

And it's not just the businesses that benefit. The Government estimates that for every £1 invested in apprenticeships, the UK economy gets back £28.³

² McKinsey: Mind the [skills] gap

³ UK Government: English apprenticeships: Our 2020 vision

Case study: Accelerating careers through data upskilling at Just Eat

In tech, there's huge demand for data experts as businesses strive to maximise their data capabilities. Businesses are increasingly exploring new and innovative ways to build and retain data expertise, by bringing in new talent and upskilling existing employees.

Just Eat launched a focused data upskilling programme, in partnership with Multiverse, to enable their employees to become data experts.

Over 120 Just Eat employees have enrolled on the Multiverse data upskilling programme so far, gaining training on key data tools including PowerBI, SQL and Python.

The results: **Accelerating data skills** — Apprentices are fully realising the benefits of upskilling, with 86% of apprentices using their new data skills on a daily basis.

Increased productivity — Just Eat apprentices are using their skills to generate impact. In one example, an apprentice used SQL to automate an audit process — reducing a 2-day long process to just 3 hours.

"Before starting, my experience with data was limited — but now, I have the ability to extract, analyse and interpret data myself, and use the language of data to ask the right questions."

Natasha Maynard
Delivery Performance Associate and Data Apprentice

"Our team has really benefited from the upskilling that Multiverse has provided. Natasha has been able to develop skills in data analysis, as well as expand the skill set within our team and provide new, useful insights into the projects we are working on."

Louise Francis
Head of Delivery Operations

#3: Opening new paths for diversity, inclusion and equity (DEI)

Our research shows: Two thirds of people (63%) see apprenticeships as a positive way to hire talent from a diversity of backgrounds.

To many leaders, the importance of DEI is clearer than ever. Workforce issues including DEI, hiring and retention are now among the top three strategic priority areas for CEOs, alongside growth and technology.⁴

By helping employers expand their hiring criteria beyond traditional degree requirements and find candidates from under-represented backgrounds, apprenticeships play an important role in widening access to careers and improving diversity in the workplace — a view which, according to our research, is shared by the majority of the UK public. **Of apprentices placed by Multiverse in the UK, 52% are from Black, Asian or multiple ethnicity backgrounds.**⁵

Studies show that when teams include people from a range of different backgrounds, they are more innovative, demonstrate increased objectivity and outperform in decision making, when compared to homogenous teams.⁶ So by building a more diverse workplace, businesses can also build a high-performance culture.

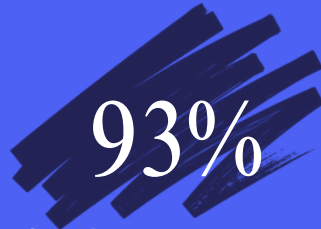
⁴ Gartner: CEOs turn a sharp eye to workforce issues and sustainability

⁵ Multiverse: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

⁶ HBR: Why diverse teams are smarter

#4: Improving long-term career prospects and strengthening retention

Our research shows:



93%
of Multiverse apprentices remain with their employer post-apprenticeship.

When businesses invest in skills training, they're investing in the long-term career prospects of their employees. Through combining the benefits of applied learning with widening access, apprenticeships can often be a life-changing opportunity.

When surveyed for our report, *Defining a New Way to Train and Hire for Today's Employers*, 87% of Multiverse apprentices at the start of their careers said they were making more now than prior to apprenticeship, and **83% believed their career prospects were higher than those who have not done an apprenticeship.**

And by giving existing employees the opportunity to upskill through apprenticeships, businesses can build internal engagement and support career development. 93% of CEOs who introduce upskilling programs observe an increase in productivity, improved ability to attract and retain talent, and a more resilient workforce.⁷

Case study:

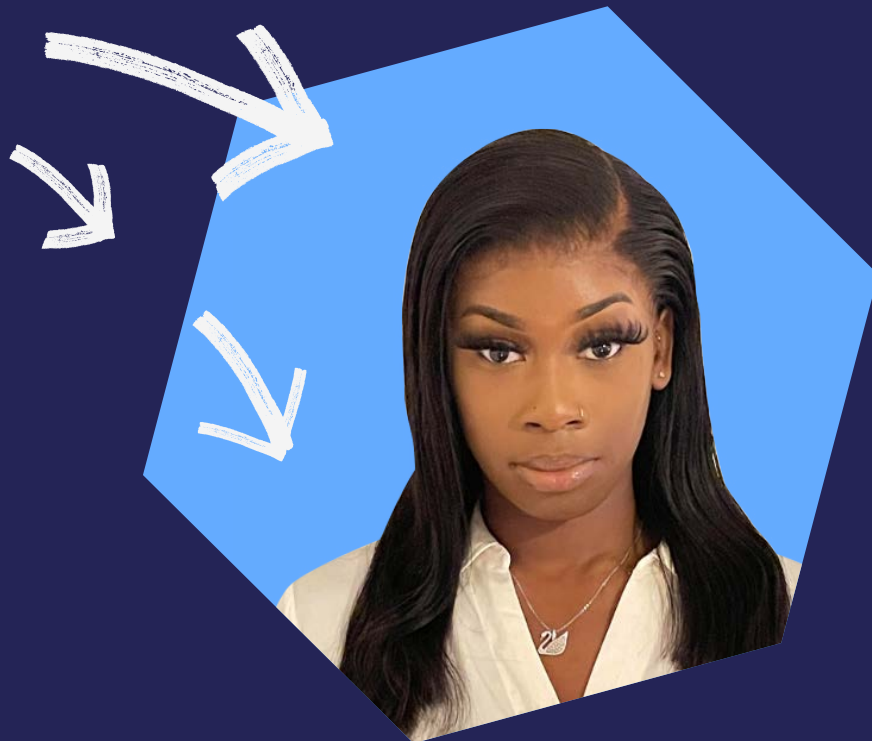
An apprenticeship was an easy decision: Jessica's story

I had quite an unconventional secondary school and sixth form experience. Despite being rather academic, I really didn't enjoy school.

I decided to drop out of sixth form and look for an apprenticeship where I could do something I was interested in and still gain my qualifications.

I had heard of Multiverse back when I started looking for apprenticeships so I searched them up. I found so many apprenticeships, so many opportunities for so many different pathways. I came across the data analytics apprenticeship at Financial Times and had my eye set on it!

So far my apprenticeship has been amazing. I have learned so much, both from my job and from Multiverse's events. I've been able to do things I didn't think I'd ever be able to do.



#5: When it comes to preparing for work, apprenticeships are preferred to traditional degrees

Our research shows: **People are four times more likely to back apprenticeships over university as the best preparation for the working world**

The widespread support for apprenticeships from the UK business community is reflected by the general public.

More than eight in ten people in the UK said they support on-the-job training, with people aged over 55, homeowners, and degree holders being the strongest backers. The vast majority (79%) also believe that apprenticeships should be open to young people in their area.

More than four in ten (44%) think young people have better job prospects by being an apprentice, compared to just 11% who think higher education offers better preparation for the world of work. They see the main advantages as:

- Earning while learning
- Gaining directly relevant skills
- Minimal graduate debt

And the public also acknowledges the wider impact apprenticeships can have — around three-quarters of respondents said they strongly believe they are good for the economy (73%), and four in five say they are highly beneficial for businesses (79%).

Whether you're seeking to recruit high-potential talent or upskill existing employees, apprenticeships can help you build the right capabilities to drive innovation forward.

Learn more about the power of professional apprenticeships.

multiverse.io

About Multiverse

At Multiverse, we're creating a new way to unlock digital transformation, close skills gaps and build a pipeline of talent from diverse backgrounds.

We work with over 500 companies, helping them address the business challenges that traditional hiring methods won't solve. Our approach is simple – we source, train, and retain exceptional under-represented talent through apprenticeships.

We offer our programs to a diverse pool of young adults and those looking to reskill. Apprentices benefit from personalised coaching, applied learning, and a community of social, networking and leadership opportunities.

For more information,
[visit www.multiverse.io](https://www.multiverse.io)