

Does the Business Need an Apprentice?

Sourced from: AI Group (2007) A guide to Managing the First 100 Days of an Apprenticeship, p20.

Does the business need an apprentice?

There are some common but problematic factors which influence employer decisions to take on an apprentice:

"My business is overloaded at the moment and I need cheap labour to ease the pressure."

"The business is running well enough to sustain existing employees only. But as the principal of the company I am constantly being asked to employ an apprentice by relatives, friends and current employees."

The decision to employ a new apprentice should not be taken lightly. A careful, detailed, methodical analysis must be undertaken that is based not just on current, short-term needs but also future, long-term expectations. Moreover, the decision must involve careful consideration of the degree of financial and human resources commitment associated with employing and retaining an apprentice.

Can the business afford an apprentice?

While this sense of social responsibility drives many apprentice employment decisions it is important that the business is able to afford the three – four year commitment and is able to meet the training and other contractual agreements that accompany this decision.

Some key questions for employers to ask when considering taking on an apprentice are:

- Can the business meet the costs of employing an apprentice for up to four years?
- Is the business able to provide the level of supervision required?
- Is the business able to meet the training obligations associated with an apprenticeship?
- Does the business have the capacity to pay wages and on-costs in good and lean times?
- Are they able to provide a safe working environment for the apprentice?

There are many considerations – depending on the type of business and industry. Information on what it will cost to employ an apprentice is readily available from industry associations, apprenticeship centres to help you make those decisions. The hard facts about costs and commitments are readily available in guides.