

John Lewis

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP



Former UTC Reading student, Andrew Jukes, is launching his career with one of the UK's most respected employers.

Andrew, who specialised in networking and computing systems at the UTC, is now working for the John Lewis Partnership, which was recently named by LinkedIn as the most sought-after employer among UK professionals.

Andrew has joined the company's Business Service Centre as an IT Shift Analyst, working in the Operations Bridge to provide first line support for enterprise storage, servers and networks. The team provides IT support across the John Lewis Partnership; including for the Waitrose and John Lewis retail operations, financial and personal services.

His appointment is part of a second cohort of apprentices taken on by the Bracknell-based centre. Gillie Rafferty, Senior Manager Service Operations at John Lewis Partnership, said:



AROUND TWO YEARS AGO WE SAW A DROP IN THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES WITH THE SKILLS AND EXPERTISE WE NEEDED. HAVING PREVIOUSLY TAKEN ON TRAINEES, WE RETURNED TO THE APPRENTICESHIP MARKET AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING OUR OWN TALENT.

WE HAVE A DISTINCT ETHOS AT THE JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP, WHICH CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP AMONGST THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY QUALIFIED AND HAVE STARTED THEIR CAREERS ELSEWHERE. BY EMPLOYING APPRENTICES, THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMMERSE THEM IN OUR BEHAVIOURS AND VALUES AS THEY TRAIN. THEY PROVIDE ENERGY AND INNOVATION WHICH BENEFITS THE BUSINESS AND IT FEELS GOOD TO BE OFFERING THEM A SPRINGBOARD TO THEIR FUTURE CAREERS.



Gillie Rafferty,
Senior Manager Service Operations

Andrew's time at UTC Reading helped him to develop the technical, as well as the soft skills, required by employers such as the John Lewis Partnership. As well as achieving the highest grades possible in his main qualification (triple distinction star) he was able to complete three MTAs – professional qualifications usually reserved for those already in employment.

He said: "These qualifications are highly regarded and most applicable to the workplace. This helped make me stand out from other candidates when it came to interviews. The UTC is the closest you can get to a working environment. This gives students a better understanding of what's to come and can give them an edge. This is boosted by industry projects through which students get the chance to work and learn with the UTC partners. These projects help students to develop another level of skills and experience which conventional schools struggle to provide.

"While at the UTC I appreciated the guidance and mentoring provided, together with the preparation for interviews and assessment centres. I am not sure that I would have secured my apprenticeship without this."

From the employer's point of view, Andrew's time at UTC Reading certainly helped him to stand out from the crowd.

Gillie said: "When it came to our recruitment, Andrew was top of the pile. He demonstrated a mature attitude at interview and impressed us with the way that he looked beyond his own performance to support other candidates during group work tasks.

"He is now just six months into his new role but has already made an excellent impression with the team. He is keen and confident when engaging with partners, regardless of their position in the company. He shows good listening skills and a high level of accuracy. The feedback we have already received suggests that Andrew is one to watch as someone with big potential."

Having started work straight after leaving the UTC, Andrew is confident about his future. He said:



JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP IS A HUGE COMPANY AND WILL HOPEFULLY PRESENT A GREAT DEAL OF FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ME. FOR THE MOMENT, I AM FOCUSED ON COMPLETING MY APPRENTICESHIP AND WILL SEE WHAT HAPPENS FROM THERE. I DEFINITELY FEEL THAT CHOOSING AN APPRENTICESHIP RATHER THAN UNIVERSITY WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME AND I AM EXCITED ABOUT THE FUTURE.

THE TEACHERS AT UTC READING HELPED ME TO PREPARE FOR MY NEW CAREER AS THEY ENCOURAGED ME TO FIND OUT WHAT AREA OF IT I WANTED TO GO INTO. THEY ALSO HELPED ME PREPARE FOR MY NEW CAREER AS THEY DEMONSTRATED THE STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORLD OF WORK.



Andrew Jukes,
IT Shift Analyst