North West Construction Ltd was founded in 1976 and is based in Blackburn with additional offices in Manchester and Liverpool. A small sized construction company that builds, maintains and renews properties to an extremely high standard to provide communities with high quality places to live, learn, visit or work, whether as part of a planned new build or rapid response maintenance programme. Particular expertise is in working within occupied homes and buildings.

The Executive Management team has reviewed its 2020 strategy and the Exec Board has agreed to develop the internal HR Capital. Key issue being addressed is the skill shortage and loss of labour. The CEO has proposed NWC adopts and supports the national apprenticeship initiative. Utilising the levy rebate scheme it could be a self funding programme. The company feels its diverse business will offer a strong foundation for career development and progression – local people into local jobs.

North West Construction has set a target to employ 25 new recruits in the workforce as apprentices. NWC is committed to developing employees across all levels. Of this planned 25 headcount the organisation would like to have at least 20% of the new apprentices from minority ethnic and disadvantaged groups from society. (Similar to Timpson Ltd case study. It is hoped the newly appointed Apprentice Manager will have advice and a suggestion how to proceed.)

- NWC will offer apprentices industry-competitive wage rates, above the government apprentice minimum wage supported by a good benefits package.
- NWC hopes to recognise the achievements of the apprentices by nominating individual champions for national industry awards and internal awards.
- NWC apprentices will learn a trade, gain recognised qualifications and essential skills while they work and earn. It will be open to anyone of any age, so whether you are new to work, new to the industry or new to a particular career it will be a great way to try something new and develop your skills while earning a competitive wage.

NWC plan to offer (a) **Trade Apprenticeships Level 3**, (b) **Office Apprenticeships (CIPD) Level 5**, (c) **Graduate Management Apprenticeships** (CMI) Level 7.

(a) **Trade apprenticeships.**

Lasting over three years they combine paid, on-the-job training and work experience with college-based study that will leave you with essential industry qualifications. You can choose between Brickwork, Carpentry and Joinery, Plumbing and Electrical and Groundworks. The trainee will work
with one of our trusted subcontractors on a NWC housing development that’s local to you. You’ll also attend a nearby college that’s contracted to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). Your study will vary, depending on your Apprenticeship, but everyone will complete a Diploma specific to their discipline, and reach NVQ Level 2. (In fact, there’ll be opportunity to get to Level 3, for those who stay on with us.) On top of this, you may also study to enhance your practical skills and learn all about your Employment Rights and Responsibilities. We plan to start the apprenticeship programme in August/September 2019 in line with the academic year, however we expect to start taking applications from March.

(b) Office Apprenticeship.

In this apprenticeship, trainees will provide vital business, administrative and HR support to our thriving company. As well as gaining vital experience of the business world, they will be given a challenging role with real responsibilities of their own, where there’ll be plenty of opportunity to use initiative and impress colleagues around you. Initially, it will be an 24-month contract, giving plenty of time to attain your NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration and CIPD Level 3 HR Practitioners qualification. (You’ll complete these qualifications at our offices, and you’ll be visited on site by your NVQ Assessors.) You could be based in any one of our six departments (Construction, Commercial, Land and Planning, Sales, Technical or Business Support). During your second year, you could well have the chance to rotate to another department. At the end of the apprenticeship, there could also be opportunities to join us in a permanent role.

(c.) Graduate Management Apprenticeship Level 7

The Senior Leader Master’s Degree Apprenticeship combines a master’s degree, apprenticeship and the option to achieve Chartered Manager or Chartered Fellow professional recognition. Designed by employers, working with CMI, to develop the strategic leadership skills of those responsible for the overall performance and long-term sustainability of their organisations. In addition to the CMI qualification these apprentices will the complete of the SMTS Qualification for construction site supervision.

Management of the Apprentices – Need for an Apprentice Programme Manager.

It has been decided that the group and the programme will need to be managed effectively. Key issue includes the legal requirement that the Apprentice Programme meets all the relevant HSE and GDPR legislation, academic criteria for awarding bodies and adds measured value to the business. 2018 The HR Director has been awarded and signed off with sufficient funds to recruit an Apprentice Manager and an admin Co-Ordinator. Together they will set up the programme, recruit the apprentices and deliver the expected results from this programme. Ideally the Manager will be a business studies graduate (BA Hons HRM) with extensive knowledge of business, HRM & H&S Law. Application of technology, latest thinking in IT systems. Robust and reliable tracking of students and staff will be key to the projects success. A project methodology will be expected taking the programme from initial concept to completion and academic awards. The Apprentice Programme will available to all stakeholders in the NWC Group – especially key contractors in the supply chain.
The Apprentice Manager will set up an induction, liaise with colleges, monitor and manage all performance data and provide 1:1 supervision. Weekly contact with College industry link coordinators will be essential as will support from line management as they coach the apprentices on the job. It must not be assumed line management know how to manage an apprentice.

**Internal Politics**

A new concept to NWC, the apprenticeship and graduate programme does have some internal sceptics in first line management. Their support for the programme can be described as passive rather than active. These individuals might see the programme as a threat to their own promotion and career paths, cynically viewing the programme as a cost efficiency strategy utilising cheaper labour. This will have to be monitored and managed by the new apprentice Manager.

**Suggested Further Research:**

NWC Ltd is comparable with similar companies: Redrow Homes, Bovis, Bramhall, Keepmoat, Kier.

**Company Structure:**

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CEO
   | Operations Director  | Finance Director  | HR Director  | Sales Director |
   | New Build Mgr        | Maint Mgr         | Credit Mgr Accounts Mgr | HR Mgr H&S Mgr | Mkt Mgr Sales Mgr |
   | Site Supervisors     | Finance Officers  | HR Officers Apprentice Mgr | Sales Teams |
   | Site Staff and Subcontractors | Clerks & admin | Apprentices |
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