

Award-winning training key to maintaining market edge

TAFE training helps increase retention of Toyota apprentices by as much as 30%

A manufacturer, distributor and exporter of vehicles, Toyota Australia has grown to be one of Australia's leading automotive companies. Contributing to the company's impressive market share of 21 percent is a comprehensive light vehicle apprentice training program, delivered in partnership with TAFE Queensland to Queensland Toyota Dealer mechanical technology apprentices.

Retaining apprentices in the face of a booming Queensland mining sector

With a mechanical technology apprenticeship taking four years to complete, Toyota was losing around 50% of final year apprentices to the lucrative Queensland mining sector. Such a drain on the industry was unsustainable, and for Bruce Scott, Toyota Australia's Apprentice Training Manager, the development of a fast tracked apprenticeship became an imperative. "There's a history of close collaboration with TAFE Queensland, so it was without question that we approached TAFE to help us reduce the length of the apprenticeship program," Bruce said.

Fast tracking Toyota's apprenticeship program

Partnering with TAFE Queensland, Toyota developed a government endorsed program that virtually halved the length of an apprenticeship, from four to an average of two and a half years. The new apprenticeship has resulted in positive changes throughout the company. As Bruce explains, "The apprentices are happier as they earn adult wages sooner; our dealers are happy because they're getting trained technicians quicker; Toyota is happy because we are producing Toyota trained technicians; and importantly, our customers are happy because they get a Toyota specialist working on their vehicles."

Maintaining market edge with Toyota specific resources and training

With training completely tailored to Toyota vehicles, apprentices are productive virtually immediately. "Keeping automotive apprentices current with industry needs is vital in maintaining market edge."

"We supply current Toyota specific training resources and materials, ensuring the apprentices have access to the latest technology. This, together with delivery by TAFE's experienced instructors, ensures our apprentices hit the ground running," Bruce explains.

Boosting apprentice retention by as much as 30%

The program has also led to a significant increase in apprentice retention, compared to traditional apprenticeships which report as low as below 50%. "In 2010, a survey was completed of the first groups that went through in 2006 and 2007. This survey revealed a significant reduction in apprentices leaving dealerships for various reasons, including seeking employment in the mining sector. The final year apprentice retention rate for these intakes is 80%. Our partnership with TAFE has delivered on all fronts — our new fast tracked apprenticeship has been a resounding success," said Bruce.

Bruce Scott
Apprentice Training Manager

Toyota Australia

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